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THE THIRTY-SEVENTH WARD Progressive Republican Organization of the City of Chicago has, pursuant to a resolution adopted at a regular meeting, sent a letter to the Honorable Herbert Hoover from which we take the following passages:

> It has come to our attention that you are again a candidate for the Republican nomination for President of the United States at the convention to be held here in Chicago next June. . . . In the last two years the majority of our banks have failed, leaving an aftermath of untold misery and woe; factories, shops, and business houses have closed their doors . . . with the result that there are probably 400,000 people in this city of Chicago who are either reduced to poverty or dependent upon charity. While it would not be proper to charge up all the ills of the country to the present Administration at Washington, yet the great majority of our people here are eagerly looking forward and anxiously waiting for a change in conditions, which fact compels us to believe that if you are the Republican candidate at the next November election the State of Illinois will go overwhelmingly Democratic. May we not suggest, in the interest of our country and of our people and for the good of the Republican Party, that you withdraw as a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and that you refuse to allow your name to be presented at the coming Republican Party convention?

We venture a modest guess that this letter did not get by Mr. Hoover's vigilant secretaries and that he has never laid eyes on it. But the fact cannot have escaped them that this is only one evidence of the anti-Hoover revolt in Chicago, which is headed by no less a person than B. W. Snow, chairman of the Central Republican Committee of that city. The New York *Evening Post* reports that Mr. Snow is the leader of a powerful anti-Hoover bloc and "has the silent aid and support, financial as well as moral, of numerous other Mid-western Republicans." Who will now say that rebellion is not in the air?

> I cannot believe that the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment, or the States which ratified it, intended to leave us helpless to correct the evils of technological unemployment and excess productive capacity which the march of invention and discovery has entailed. There must be power in the States and the nation to remold through experimentation our economic practices to meet changing social and economic needs. . . . Denial of the right to such experimentation may be fraught with serious consequences to the nation.

WE HAVE TAKEN these remarkable words from a minority opinion, handed down on March 21 in the case of the New State Ice Company of Oklahoma City against Ernest A. Liebman, by Justice Brandeis of the Supreme Court, with only Justice Stone concurring. Mr. Liebman sued to bring before the courts the question whether the State of Oklahoma had the right to limit the ice business to those persons to whom its State Corporation Commission gave a certificate of public convenience and necessity. Under the Supreme Court's decision Mr. Liebman wins, and can start up his independent ice company without obtaining the consent or approval of the State Corporation Commission. Justice Brandeis's opinion is very long, and is fortified by such a wealth of citations and legal knowledge as to have profoundly impressed even the reporters who sent a summary of it over the wires. It will seem radical, indeed, at this period in our affairs, which Justice Brandeis declares to be "an emergency more serious than war," but if there is to be State planning and control it may well prove to be an epoch-making opinion. As it is, it vividly recalls Mr. Brandeis's brief in the case of Muller against Oregon written before he went on the Supreme Court, which has exercised such a vital influence upon the social thought of this country in the matter of employment.

WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE the Interstate Commerce Commission, under pressure from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, has reversed its attitude and authorized the Missouri Pacific Railroad to borrow $12,800,000 from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in order to repay $5,850,000, part of a loan of $11,700,000 made by a banking syndicate headed by J. P. Morgan and Company, the remaining $6,950,000 to be used for other purposes. The Interstate Commerce Commission stated frankly that the bankers should have extended the entire loan of $11,700,000, due on April 1, to October 1, instead

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of the half which they have agreed to postpone. This is not a very fortunate happening for the bankers, however justified their position may be, for it will invite criticism from many other sources and will result in further statements that the Reconstruction Corporation is there only to succor the big fellows in our business life. The commission yielded because it felt the existing uncertainty "as to the disposition of the April 1 maturities of the Missouri Pacific Railroad is detrimental to the general credit situation of the railroads." It added, however, that it was not convinced that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation should take up bank loans of this character. The situation is not improved by the press statements that the Interstate Commerce Commission's decision is the result of pressure exerted by President Hoover, who has been credited with issuing definite instructions to Administration officials that "no railroads are to be allowed to go into receiverships if it is within the power of federal agencies to prevent it." How nice it would be if only Mr. Hoover could be as concerned about the welfare of the starving Americans!

WHILE WE HAVE elsewhere highly commended the independence of the House of Representatives in voting down the sales-tax proposal, we must not be thought to indorse the action of the House in taking this opportunity to raise the tariffs on oil and coal, the latter by ten cents a hundred pounds. If there is to be tariff revision it should be considered separately and not brought into the involved question of balancing the budget. As a matter of fact, there should, of course, be no tariff increases whatsoever. To any person of sound common sense it should be obvious that what the country is suffering from today is too high tariffs, and too many of them. Indeed, it is more and more doubtful whether the whole world can be worked out of its present dire straits without the leveling of tariff barriers everywhere. To put a higher tariff on coal and oil means that in the case of the former the price of this necessity will be increased to every user at the very moment that the purchasing power of the American people is at its lowest. It is interesting to note, however, that this indefensible performance was not approved by all of the group which defeated the sales tax; on the contrary Congressman La Guardia pleaded with some of his colleagues not to "stifle this bill with tariff provisions."

THOUGH WE ARE NOT profoundly impressed by the mental processes of Silas H. Strawn, it is gratifying at this juncture to have the head of the United States Chamber of Commerce on his return from a trip to Europe assure the country that the problem of reparations is the "most urgent and immediate question before all of the important European countries." "Until," he reports, "this matter is settled—in other words until the Lausanne conference in June—no significant improvement in trade or finance can take place." Quite right. This statement should be pasted in the hat of every single Congressman, and the clerk of each House of Congress should read it out every day with the addition that there can be no final settlement until Congress acts from our side and cancels the debts which cannot be and will never be paid. "The essential feature in this situation," Mr. Strawn continues, "is the absolute necessity of reaching privately some agreement prior to the Lausanne conference in June." He is also able to say that the spirit in which the question is now being discussed by leading statesmen and business men in France, Germany, and Great Britain "gives considerable promise that some agreement will be reached." This is good news indeed, but not wholly surprising. If Germany can hold out till June, the wisdom of the several postponements will be clear. For the French situation is rapidly getting worse; that country is bound to be in a much more tractable frame of mind by June. Unemployment is reported to have broken all records, the budget is far from being balanced, the deficit is running into billions, the depression is getting steadily worse, and for the moment the strategic advantage of the financial situation has passed, despite French gold, from Paris to London.

PREMIER MACDONALD of Great Britain has proposed a four-Power conference to consider the problem of Central Europe. This is the British answer to the French plan for a Danubian customs federation, presumably under the aegis of France, to be composed of Austria, Hungary, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugoslavia, and Rumania. The proposal, coming less than a year after the prohibition of the German-Austrian customs union, naturally has no German support, and the hesitation of Britain was entirely expected. Britain, of course, is desirous that the financial and economic chaos which exists in Central Europe be cured as speedily as possible, but it is not desirous of seeing this chaos used as a pretext for increased control by France of the countries in question. Léon Blum, the Socialist leader, writing in *Le Populaire*, says: "England will never give her assent unless the Danube plan is in no way directed against anyone. It cannot succeed unless there is a general agreement among the great Powers." The proposed Danubian conference, therefore, is of the greatest importance in the economic rehabilitation of Europe. It will meet, according to the present schedule, less than two months before the Lausanne conference on reparations in June. It may, indeed, continue in session until that meeting begins.

THERE SEEMS TO BE NO REASON, at least at this stage of the game, for the entrance of Americans into the controversy, time-honored enough, between Great Britain and the Irish Free State. The question immediately at issue is the oath of allegiance, which Mr. J. H. Thomas, Secretary of State for the Dominions, says is obligatory in the Irish treaty, and President de Valera says is not. The Irish President described his official position as follows: "It is our opinion that the oath clause in the Anglo-Irish treaty is not mandatory—that it is not mandatory in form—and that, moreover, there is no parallel in our time, in the treaty relationships between states, for the imposition by one of the parties of a conscience test on the other." The other moot question is that of the $15,000,000 of land annuities which England desires to collect, and which Mr. de Valera declares are part of a financial agreement between the two countries which was never ratified. It is hard to believe that some amicable settlement of these matters will not be reached, or that the Irish question, in a hard-beset world, will be permitted once more to become a vital one. Meanwhile, it is of interest to American liberals to know that the first act of the new Irish President was to free twenty Republican pris-

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oners jailed during President Cosgrave's tenure of office, and to suspend the public-safety act, passed in the Dail about six months ago, which virtually established martial law over Ireland.

THE FREE STATE of Maryland has duly and officially acted on the matter of the Negro lynched on January 4 in Salisbury Courthouse Square after he had killed his employer. One hundred and twenty witnesses were solemnly heard by the grand jury investigating the case; seventy of them testified in one day. In view of this latter rather considerable number, it is perhaps not entirely surprising that the grand jury reported: "We find that there is absolutely no evidence that can remotely connect anyone with the instigation or perpetration of the murder." So commonplace has a finding of this nature become, after a grand-jury session on a lynching, that it would be hardly worth comment if the State were not Maryland, and if Governor Ritchie and State's Attorney Bailey had not been so emphatic in their declarations that everything possible would be done to bring the lynchers to court. One wonders whether the examination of more than a hundred witnesses in a three-day session would give opportunity for quite the detailed investigation that might be required. It is worth noting, also, that our highly esteemed neighbor, the Baltimore *Sun,* had no editorial comment whatever to make on the grand-jury findings. After a lynching has taken place, a regular routine of indignant protest and do-nothing investigation has grown up. Maryland has dutifully followed the routine.

THE ALABAMA SUPREME COURT, by a vote of six to one, has upheld the conviction of seven of the eight Scottsboro Negroes for rape, and the date of execution has been fixed as May 13. The eighth boy, Eugene Williams, since he was less than sixteen years old at the time of the alleged crime, will be remanded for a new trial. A motion for an appeal to the United States Supreme Court will at once be filed, and it is in this court that the real test of the case—in which the precedent of the Arkansas riot cases will figure—will come. Meanwhile the International Labor Defense, whose attorneys conducted the last appeal, has dutifully made the usual protestant gestures. A telegram to Governor Miller declares: "Millions of workers throughout world enraged at State Supreme Court confirmation of death verdicts against Scottsboro boys." And the following protest was wired to Chief Justice John Anderson of the Alabama Supreme Court:

> Your confirmation of death verdicts against innocent Scottsboro boys is blow against working class, especially poor Negroes in South. Workers throughout world protest this upholding of legal lynching and obvious frame-ups. . . . By all our resources of mass-organization appeal to public and legal measures we pledge to fight this terror which your decision will aid.

Since Justice Anderson's was the one dissenting vote in the decision, this particular gesture seems just a bit ungrateful. But one can be encouraged to remember that the best test of the case is yet to be had, and that the Supreme Court of the United States is not likely to be prejudiced by this sort of windy indignation, even allowing it to be necessary in order to raise funds for the defense. The boys still have a chance for their lives.

THE KENTUCKY BATTLE-FRONT continues to supply copy for the metropolitan newspapers. Two hundred college students who went to the mining regions on a tour of inspection were sent packing by armed deputies at the Kentucky border, and will attempt an appeal and a protest to Governor Ruby Laffoon. The student expedition, while it was perfectly legal and proper, sounded—especially in the face of warnings from the leader, Rob Hall, that "leather coats are the mark of the Communist"—just a little silly when it started off. By now, however, it has probably contributed more fuel to the Kentucky fire than any of the numerous previous expeditions have. To turn back at the points of guns a group of young men and women who want to make a disinterested and unprejudiced inspection of certain sections of an American State is an act which would make almost anybody suspect that that State had something it desperately wished to conceal. What is going on in Kentucky, anyway? If it is a part of the United States, as we have always been led to believe, why should not a group of persons from another part of the United States enter it unchallenged? Many outsiders believe, after reading the newspapers for the last few months, that what is in effect a civil war between operators and miners is going on in the State; that miners and their families, particularly their children, are not only starving but that relief sent to them in the form of food or clothing is destroyed or sent back; that the Red Cross deliberately refuses to assist these miners on strike; that the wage of a miner, when he works, is not enough to keep him alive. What is the State of Kentucky or its Governor, Mr. Ruby Laffoon, or the armed deputies in Bell and Harlan counties, meeting with a gun any stranger who would like to see things for himself, doing to correct this impression?

A FINE-SPIRITED and useful Irish patriot was Sir Horace Plunkett, whose death is just reported. Not that he sought office or took sides with one group of extremists or the other, although he was the founder of the Irish Dominion League for the purpose of bringing dominion government to Ireland. His contribution lay rather in ameliorating English feeling, in mediation, in using his own fine personal standing in London to persuade those in authority to grant self-government to Ireland. This was, of course, not strong enough ground for the Republicans, who did him the immeasurable wrong of burning his beautiful home at Killeragh while he was visiting in the United States, and with it priceless inherited and purchased works of Irish art and old Irish manuscripts, porcelain, and furniture. This was his reward for years of devoted labor in developing the Irish agricultural cooperatives, in improving village and rural life, in founding and carrying on Ireland's first agricultural paper, the *Irish Homestead,* in publicly appealing to Ulster not to forsake the rest of Erin but to join hands in a self-governing country. Of all of his labor that for Irish agriculture was the most vital and lasting; it bears securely the impress of his own personality and of the ideas that he largely acquired in ten years of ranching in the United States, and was the fruit of his belief that Ireland's ills were less political than economic. A man of great modesty but of profound understanding and rare culture, Sir Horace was so much in the United States as to seem as much an American as an Irishman.

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The Revolt Succeeds

NOT in thirty years has there been so remarkable and dramatic a happening in Congress as the uprising in the House of Representatives. When it began, a certain news agency declared that if the sales tax were defeated it would be a disaster to the leadership of both Speaker Garner and President Hoover; that it would be almost without parallel. Until the last two days before the vote those who favored the sales tax were certain that enough coalition votes could be brought together to overwhelm the opposition—and then came the complete collapse. The handful of "disloyal and disobedient" Congressmen who put their consciences and their beliefs above party commands achieved the impossible. Exactly as in the case of the defeat of Judge Parker for the Supreme Court, the revolt began with two or three men who determined to go on record against what they considered an intolerable wrong. Again, as the fight progressed, the dissenters won more and more adherents in Congress and more and more support from the country, until the opposition crumbled. The insurgents not only won on the merits of their argument; the force of their attacks was such that the Republican-Democratic leadership literally went to pieces, burying in its ruins the Presidential boom of Speaker Garner and leaving Congressmen Rainey and Crisp exposed in all their sorry weakness.

This, we say, was a great triumph for good, old-fashioned parliamentarianism. For the fight was won in a debate well worthy of the past history of the House in which it was held. As does not often happen, it brought out new men, and created new leaders who handled with remarkable ability and courage a question of extraordinary difficulty. We are aware that the business world and that portion of the public which reads only the headlines are frothing at the mouth and are denouncing the rebels as malcontents who are merely out to make trouble, who are jeopardizing the credit of the country by not at once balancing the budget, who are defying the party leadership they ought to obey. Our dear old New York *Times,* of course, wrings its hands—had the revolt gone its way it would have declared this a triumph for political freedom and parliamentary government. Instead, while admitting that "party leadership on both sides was not what it might have been," still, it says, "ways must be found to induce members of the party to sink their individual preferences in the larger interest," and it quotes approvingly an English lord who once said: "Whatever we may think about this piece of legislation, we must all say the same thing"!

That is a base appeal to men to stifle their consciences at the behest of a few leaders who have no other claim to leadership than that they rose by seniority. It is an appeal for the continuance of that docile subordination and narrow partisanship which have reduced the House of Representatives to a low level, and given rise to the charge that Congress is a mere automaton able to do only what it is told. Nothing could more quickly restore its prestige, or refute the charge that Congress, like foreign parliaments, does not serve the country, than a few more debates like this.

It is true that the *Times,* and those of its school, represent the pending tax bill as a grave national emergency requiring the subordination of everything else to the task of balancing the budget. But we deny that any such emergency exists as to warrant men's rushing blindly into any tax proposal; to do so is not to insure financial soundness, but to invite a still more disastrous situation. It is not as if the sales tax were the only possible way out. Nor is the balancing of the budget a matter of hours. The budget of the present fiscal year ends June 30, and is hopelessly buried in a deficit which will total more than $2,000,000,000 by the end of the year. What is at stake and being discussed is the budget which is to go into effect next July—a quarter of a year hence. There is plenty of time for setting up as sound and wise a program as can be devised.

Moreover, it will not be fatal if the budget is not balanced at this session. We know that Wall Street and European bankers are crying out that it will be a fatal blow to American credit, but we do not believe it. The last offering of one billion dollars of Treasury notes was oversubscribed three and one-half times; there is still plenty of money to be had for government securities. More than that, under present conditions it is impossible to be certain that one can balance the budget. No one can accurately estimate what the Government's income of next year will be. That within a year or two the budget must be balanced we do not deny. But this is not the time for hysteria or for being stampeded into unsound legislation. That the sales tax is unsound was admitted even by some who voted for it, for example, so ordinarily sane a man as Congressman Huddleston of Alabama, who said that it was a thoroughly bad tax, but thought he ought to vote for it because of the emergency.

We have nothing but unqualified praise for Congressmen La Guardia of New York, Ragon of Arkansas, Rankin of Mississippi, Swing of California, Kvale of Minnesota, Blanton of Texas, Cannon of Missouri, and Doughton of North Carolina. They were not stampeded by Mr. Rainey's lachrymose assertion that "we are in greater danger than when our boys marched to France." To legislate in this state of mind, by laying hands on the first thing that suggests itself, is not statesmanship, it is panic. To suggest that the sales tax is the only way to balance the budget is preposterous. Let the joint Garner-Rainey-Crisp-Hoover leadership look to Germany if they wish some other suggestions as to how money can be forced out of people's pockets. Moreover, so far as the present situation is concerned, Senator Borah and the other Senators who are planning to cut expenses by a straight 25 per cent are on the wisest, the inevitable track. Mr. Hoover again revealed his feebleness when he admitted that he had cut only $365,000,000 out of the budget. And what did he mean when he wrote to Congress that, with respect to the $700,000,000 bill for army and navy, "we should not further reduce the strength of our defense"? If that is so, why not recall our delegation at once from the Disarmament Conference in Geneva? Throughout this whole episode the President has again demonstrated his unfitness to guide the nation in this perilous hour.

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Setbacks in India

SIR SAMUEL HOARE, Secretary of State for India, sent the British Parliament home for its holiday recess with new assurances that the Indian situation was improving, that no extreme repression had been carried out although the "drastic and severe" ordinances would be continued as long as the need for them existed, and that reports on India in the American press were "far better than some months ago." It seems legitimate to wonder why, if conditions are so much better for the British raj, the ordinances have to be kept operative. What Sir Samuel and other apologists for British policy do not see is that no quantity of Indian propaganda—of which he implies we have been the victims—could possibly influence the minds of the American people in favor of India as much as the brutal regime recently instituted in the peninsula. Hardy indeed would be that American of any point of view who would not recoil from the deeds of tyranny acclaimed with jubilation by a considerable portion of the British press. We have our own imperialistic sins to atone for, yet those of us who have unfailingly protested against such outrages are not compelled to silence when British pride, functioning through a policy of Tory reaction, clamps down on India a despotism more resembling medieval barbarism than anything else. Sir Samuel's optimism may be due to the customary diplomatic strategy or to an imperialistic self-hypnosis, we do not know which. It is not based on anything taking place in India itself. The cost of British ruthlessness in the present crisis is a loss in world opinion and an intensification of Indian resistance.

In view of the facts admitted in British liberal journals alone, Sir Samuel's denials of censorship and pro-British propaganda seem merely ludicrous. For notwithstanding the censorship the truth continues to leak out. The Associated Press has done some excellent truth-telling. Indian journals were allowed to exist for a time, with accounts of police brutalities, arrests, fines, beatings, and shootings, apparently on the theory that these evidences of British determination might bring world approval. At present even moderate Indian papers are more guarded, while the outspoken ones are being suppressed.

The worst setback to British policy since Mahatma Gandhi went to prison was the recent decision of the powerful All-India Moslem Congress, speaking for the vast majority of India's 70,000,000 Moslems, to break definitely with the authorities. Declaring that they had lost faith in Britain's intent to grant the full Moslem demands as presented (with some British collusion) at the Second Round Table Conference, the Moslem spokesmen have refused to collaborate with the committees now attempting to work out a communal settlement within the lines of the constitution favored by the British. This does not, of course, mean that the Moslems are to unite officially at once with Gandhi and other leaders of civil disobedience. Not since their first conflicts with the Hindus nearly a thousand years ago have the Moslems been able to harmonize their interests with those of the larger group, who today number 200,000,000. But it does mean that they will no longer be used as tools against the program of the Indian National Congress, and if by June they are still unsatisfied, they are committed to "direct action."

The suppression of opinion in India, under which many editors have been jailed, presses seized, mailing privileges denied, and letters marked "opened by censor," has been coupled with efforts to prevent Nationalist reports reaching the hands of sympathizers in England, even when the latter are members of Parliament. Nevertheless, abundant accounts of cold-blooded cruelty from reliable sources and containing specific details are at hand. But we do not intend to retail atrocity stories here. Rather, we prefer to take note of the constant shift of moderate Indian opinion away from the Government. The Servant of India Society, for instance, whose leader is Srinivasa Sastri, while disapproving of civil disobedience, by official resolution has placed the blame for the conflict on the shoulders of the Viceroy rather than Gandhi. The Council of the National Liberal Federation, after recording its disappointment at the lack of progress toward the aims enunciated by the Prime Minister at the close of the Round Table Conference, has called on the Government to repeal or drastically to modify the ordinances, to resort to conciliation, and to proceed with a constitution providing for a responsible central Indian administration. It declared: "In the absence of a policy such as has been outlined, it is becoming increasingly difficult for any political party of Indians to continue in the path of cooperation with the Government." If the reported talks between Congress leaders and the Viceroy mean the reopening of negotiations, it will indicate the dawning of realism on the part of the ruling power.

England Goes Moral

USUALLY—and with all too much justification—it is assumed that America can be depended upon to furnish the most striking examples of the gross miscarriage of justice. Our fanatics as a rule have more influence than fanatics have in any other civilized country, but in certain English institutions there is a residue of plain unreason occasionally responsible for incredible things, and one of them has just been called to our attention by an indignant editorial in the *New Statesman and Nation*.

It seems that an eccentric named Geoffrey de Montalk took to a London printer certain verses which he had composed and which he desired to have printed for distribution among his friends. The printer found them obscene, took the manuscript to the police, and three judges in the Court of Criminal Appeals have just confirmed the sentence of Mr. Montalk to six months in prison for "obscene libel." It appears that the verses are, in the ordinary understanding of the word, obscene. But it also appears, first, that the author—who wore a red cloak in court—is an eccentric near the border line of irresponsibility and, second, that the manuscript was neither published nor even intended for sale. Sir Ernest Wild explained the severity of the sentence on the ground that it was his duty to keep the purity of letters from defilement and he established a precedent that, for conviction, it is not necessary to show any attempt to corrupt public morals. As the *New Statesman and Nation* points out, any Englishman who writes a dubious limerick and shows it to

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a friend is liable to imprisonment. There are also far more serious possibilities:

> A journalist who brings an article to an editor with the familiar remark, "I am not sure whether this is publishable, but you might look," is liable to prosecution for obscene libel if the editor cares to consult the police. An artist who paints a nude and offends the taste of a hanging committee may find himself in prison if a member of the committee reports him to the police. Every novelist who submits a new work has to run the risk that some person in the publisher's house may turn informer. The publisher may not have decided to publish it, the author may have only submitted an unexpurgated draft, but he may be guilty of an obscene libel in the eyes of the law. . . .
>
> The danger is very real. The police, hitherto usually restrained from absurd prosecutions by the knowledge that the courts are unlikely to take seriously cases where no intention to corrupt public morals is involved, can now proceed with the assurance that anything which a jury may think indecent may be successfully prosecuted. What is safe? It is not long since the police found some of Blake's drawings in an exhibition and asked for a warrant against Mr. William Blake. Properly handled, most juries will say that any picture of the nude human form is obscene. But Mr. Blake was not prosecuted or condemned. He was dead. Surely an antique law which invited such absurdities and, in the case of the living, such cruelties should also be dead.

During the last two or three years we have been, in this country, relatively fortunate so far as incidents of this sort are concerned. Recently the Los Angeles police not only failed to find Mr. Aristophanes when they closed the performance of "Lysistrata," but also failed to get a conviction in the case of the producer and performers concerned. In New York we have had a series of highly gratifying decisions in connection with the various books on sex hygiene and in the cases where works of fiction or poetry were concerned. The Society for the Suppression of Vice no longer has its own way in the courts, and indeed there has not, during the past two or three years, been a single case where a recognized publishing house failed to be vindicated by the courts when one of its publications was challenged. But it is not to be forgotten that we have merely been fortunate. In most instances the decision has been the result of nothing except the liberality and good sense of the magistrate called upon to make a decision. When Mr. Sumner's agents cause an arrest to be made, the victim can merely tremble and recognize the fact that no one on earth can tell him beforehand whether he is going to be sent to jail or merely—as has very often been the case recently—supplied with some excellent free publicity. A wave of hysteria, a self-righteous magistrate, a prosecuting attorney out to make a reputation for himself—and any one of a number of things quite as fantastic as Mr. Montalk's conviction is perfectly possible so long as there remain on the statute books laws which punish obscenity but do not make the slightest effort to define what obscenity is. Obscenity means whatever an individual or a group of individuals—a judge or a jury—may want it to mean. As long as laws based upon such undefined conceptions remain in force, anything is possible either in England or the United States. If Great Britain begins to punish men for what they merely wanted to publish, America may soon begin locking its citizens up for having evil thoughts.

A Man Named Smith

A MAN named Smith died the other day with practically no notice by the press at large. He had been a courageous friend of the downtrodden and the persecuted, and he died a martyr to one of the most deserving but unpopular causes of recent years. This man named Smith may soon be forgotten, yet he was a shining and noble spirit who makes tawdry by comparison hundreds of smug, secure, stuffed-shirt reformers or peddlers of futile fiddle-faddle who pose for the rotogravure sections of the newspapers.

Elmer S. Smith was a lawyer who for many years was a friend and adviser of the Industrial Workers of the World in the State of Washington. Since 1920 he had given his life unsparingly to obtain freedom for the men sent to jail for life as a result of the shooting in Centralia in 1919 of participants in the Armistice Day parade who attempted to enter the I. W. W. hall. Smith had advised the I. W. W. that they had a right—as legally they had—to defend themselves, for which he was tried with others for conspiracy to commit murder in the first degree. He was acquitted, whereupon he devoted his life thereafter to the liberation of those convicted. He ate poor food, lived in shabby quarters, worked without ceasing, risked physical harm, and endured humiliating public obloquy—all of which finally broke his health.

In consequence of his campaign Smith was disbarred in 1925, charged with advocating violence. The opinion of the State Supreme Court was written by Kenneth Mackintosh, recently nominated by President Hoover as federal circuit judge. Judge Mackintosh cited practically nothing against Smith except excerpts from I. W. W. pamphlets and songs. Five of Judge Mackintosh's colleagues indorsed his opinion. Chief Justice Tolman and Judge Parker dissented, saying that Smith was not a member of the I. W. W. and no utterance of his had been produced to justify disbarment. A short time ago, after Judge Mackintosh's term had expired, the Supreme Court reinstated Smith as a member of the bar.

Smith died with the injustice against the Centralia victims still unrighted. Of the eight men convicted one was found to be insane and later was released when declared sane. Another died in prison and lately two were paroled. The four others are still behind bars.

In his disbarment opinion Judge Mackintosh cited—and violently condemned—only one considerable utterance by Smith:

> There are two animals in the world for which I have a profound admiration. One is the lumberjack and the other is a mule. As between the lumberjack and the mule I think more of the mule. . . . How many people ever saw a mule lie down in a fenced-in yard where there was a fine haystack and a great big box of oats and starve to death? . . . How many ever knew a lumberjack to come into a place where there are millions of tons of food stored away and sleep in the street and go hungry? I am a profound admirer of the mule.

This treasonous doctrine, if treason it was, served to disbar Elmer Smith. One wonders just how treasonous it would seem to suffering unemployed workers today.

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Shall We Devaluate the Dollar?*

By HENRY HAZLITT

II

IN the first half of this article we reviewed the probable consequences of continuing our current policy of deflation. Let us now examine what the probable effects would be if, while still adhering to the gold basis, we should devaluate the dollar. It is important never to lose sight of the fact that a price in any gold-standard country expresses, at bottom, the relation between the value of the commodity priced and the value of a given weight of gold. In the United States this weight of gold is 25.8 grains—the dollar. Devaluation would be the process of reducing the weight of gold in the dollar, so that goods, which would still continue to be exchanged for the same quantity of gold, would be exchanged for more dollars. The amount of this reduction of gold in the dollar should be enough at least to offset the decline of wholesale and raw-material prices since 1929. (There has been a widespread tendency in the last two years to blame the gold standard for the collapse in prices. There is no evidence whatever to support this belief, and plenty of evidence against it. While the full causes for the collapse are somewhat complex, it represents in the main the second major phase of the drop in commodity prices from the war level, the first major phase of which occurred in 1920-21. The course of prices in the last decade and a half parallels rather strikingly that in the corresponding period after the Napoleonic wars. It is not the value of gold that has risen, but the values of goods that have fallen. But while the drop in prices was not *caused* by the gold standard, it can be reversed by an *alteration* in the gold standard.)

The first effect of devaluation would be a compensating rise in prices on all the organized security and commodity markets. If the dollar were devaluated by 33⅓ per cent (to offset the average decline in wholesale prices, as reflected by the latest Bureau of Labor index, to 66.2 per cent of their 1926 level), these prices should eventually rise on an average by about 50 per cent. The effect of this advance on confidence and enterprise would be enormous. The raw-material industries would almost immediately begin resuming activity and taking on labor. With increasing employment the present downward tendency of wages would cease, and while there might be some lag, labor in most industries would be in a position to secure a reasonably quick restoration of the recent wage cuts. It is not probable—and it would certainly not be desirable—that there should be any rise in rents, retail prices, etc., equal to that in wholesale prices. One of the worst ailments we already suffer from, as we have seen, is the lack of equilibrium between raw-material prices and the prices of manufactured goods at retail. But at least the otherwise inevitable continued downward tendency of retail prices would be arrested, and the reductions already made would eventually be restored.

With the value of farm products rising, the value of farms would rise again; the farmer would cease to be crushed by his mortgage; his creditors, including his bank, could become liquid again; and, of course, bonded indebtedness would be less for everyone. From one point of view, the devaluation here suggested would be tantamount to reducing the farmer's mortgage, the mortgages on real estate everywhere, the bonded indebtedness of corporations, and the indebtedness of municipalities and States as well as the national debt, by 33⅓ per cent. But it would be reducing them only in terms of physical gold. In real purchasing power it would merely be restoring all such indebtedness to its approximate level in 1929; it would simply cancel the *increase* in the real burden of that indebtedness since then. To be sure, it would also cancel the increase in the real burden of the foreign debt owed to us, but, aside from the desirability of doing this on grounds of mere justice, it is absolutely necessary if we still hope to collect the major part of that debt. Another effect of devaluation would be to cancel the increase in the last two years in the percentage burden of all specific tariff duties, an increase which has resulted in a still further strangulation of trade. Devaluation would also give us a temporary advantage as compared with other nations in our export sales. It would, of course, be foolish to recommend devaluation merely for the sake of this differential advantage, which would be short-lived in any case, and could be offset by higher tariffs. It would be to our interest, indeed, to have other countries follow us in devaluating; for their trade is suffering from the price collapse no less than ours, and devaluation would make them better customers. As Great Britain and other nations seem in any case likely to devaluate, devaluation at home would at least cancel the temporary export advantage that they would otherwise have—and to a certain extent already have—over us.

What would be the disadvantages to offset against the very great gains possible through devaluation? Let us not attempt to underrate them. Morally, as all opponents of the proposal will be sure to point out, we shall be guilty of at least a partial "repudiation" of all debts, including the government's own debt. But it must be remembered that this will be far less a real than a purely technical "repudiation." We shall be repudiating debts when measured by gold, but not when measured by real purchasing power. And if we do not consent to make this type of uniform and *equalized* repudiation, we shall have repudiation in fact anyway, and on a much larger scale, through the method—indorsed by the most intransigent advocates of "sound" finance—of private bankruptcy. Without devaluation the most strongly intrenched creditors will get their pound of flesh, and the less protected creditors will have their holdings wiped out entirely. It cannot be denied that devaluation would work inequitably upon a few bondholders—those who have held their bonds since before the war, for example. But this same inequity would have occurred had the 1926-29 price level proved permanent, and it cannot be offset against the monstrous inequity that would otherwise fall on everyone else. Would devaluation imperil the future sources of lending? It might temporarily discourage investors from putting money in new bonds, but it would encourage them to invest in

* Part I of this article appeared in last week's issue.—EDITOR THE NATION.

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stocks. And the discouragement even of bond issues might be no worse than that which occurred in the post-war period up to 1929—a discouragement that was not very noticeable. Devaluation, of course, would injure our prestige as an international money center, but I do not think the effects of this are likely to be as serious as might be supposed. International banking profits are an almost negligible part of our national income as compared with their great importance in England, and even London has lost far less business by going off gold than it was at first thought it would. Moreover, the loss of international banking profits is not a real offset against putting millions of desperate men back to work (*one-third* of our factory workers, as shown by United States Department of Labor figures, are now unemployed) and restoring the solvency of farmers, banks, railroads, and industrial corporations.

The greatest danger of devaluation is its possible effect when we come to the *next* fall of commodity prices. Then, because the previous devaluation would be remembered, there would be a raid on our gold supply not only by foreign bankers, but by our own citizens. But this would be very unlikely to occur unless it were expected that the commodity price drop would be comparable with that which we have experienced since the war. It ought not to be difficult to convince the outside world that devaluation would never be attempted to offset any minor price drop, but only a collapse comparable in violence and scope with that of the last few years—and there has been no such collapse of world gold prices in a century. Before another century has passed, let us hope, we shall have found a better way of rectifying—or forestalling—violent price changes.

Devaluation is a drastic remedy, but let us not deceive ourselves into supposing that we can achieve real results with less drastic means. We cannot do so with mere "credit inflation." The volume of credit, in general, follows rather than precedes changes in the commodity price level; the belief that the causation is the other way round is a widespread but profound fallacy, and policies based on that fallacy will prove worse than futile. One need merely point to the Federal Reserve banks, which have been trying to stem the tide by keeping money artificially cheap and loading up with government securities—and the only result is, that they are loaded up with government securities. The Glass-Steagall bill and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation are only palliative measures; they are at bottom mere stop-gaps. They rest on the hope that the price decline and the depression are both quite temporary; that prices will revive, activity be resumed, and the loans be paid off; but if this does not happen, then the corporation and the Federal Reserve banks will experience the fate of the Farm Board—they will be left holding the bag.

Those who do not like drastic remedies may contend that there was a violent decline in wholesale commodity prices in 1921, and that we recovered from it without devaluation. But the situation in 1921 cannot be compared with the situation today. It came after a comparatively short period of abnormally high prices and abnormally high rates of profit, to which wages and other costs had not yet adjusted themselves. The extreme decline in wholesale commodity prices of 40 per cent in 1921 was followed by a decline of about 20 per cent in wage rates. But this readjustment, and the continuation of the readjustment up to early 1930, by which time the 20 per cent cut in wage rates had been almost entirely restored—though the price level had fallen below that of 1922—appears to have taken up most of the slack in profits, so that the further violent fall in prices in 1930 and 1931 cannot be absorbed by industry without corresponding reductions in costs of production. The vital difference between the two price declines has been made obvious, however, through the immense difference already felt in their effects. To refuse to devaluate now is in effect to insist that reductions in costs of production must come in wages but not in interest burden, in the return of labor but not in the return of capital.

We must think of devaluation as a surgeon thinks of a major operation. It is not to be undertaken lightly; it is not unattended by risk; but the risk is far less than that of doing nothing. When a surgeon has decided he must amputate a leg, he amputates it. He ceases to hope, against the real probabilities, that the infection will clear up. He does not talk of a "compromise" course, or of a "partial" amputation, or of a "gradual" amputation. And this brings us to the *modus operandi* of devaluation. The paradox of devaluation is this—that while the question ought to be thoroughly thrashed out in public, we cannot afford to have it thrashed out in public! For a public advocacy of it by influential bankers or statesmen would in itself lead to raids on our gold both by European bankers and by our own citizens.

Let us, therefore, suppose a few miracles. Let us suppose that either President Hoover or Secretary Mills became convinced of the necessity of devaluation and in private talk convinced the other. The next step would be for both of them to call in Senator Glass and, say, Representative Steagall, and try to convince *them* privately. Next Messrs. Glass and Steagall would round up their respective Senate and House committees and try to convince *them* privately. This done, Congress could be called in secret executive session, the proposal made, and—let us suppose—adopted overnight. The public would then wake up to read in its morning papers that the gold content of the dollar had been reduced to two-thirds of its former amount. Specie payments would perhaps be suspended until the first of the following month to let the meaning sink in and to prevent panicky withdrawals of gold. The Macmillan Committee, in its report to Parliament last June, though it rejected the suggestion of a moderate devaluation of the pound sterling at that time, remarked that if it were done at all it must be done in this way—"suddenly and without notice." The way I have outlined, however, would be merely the best way to bring about devaluation; it would not be the only possible way. Devaluation could come finally through default, as it did in post-war Germany, Italy, and France, and as it now appears likely to come in Great Britain. But devaluation after months or years of a violently fluctuating paper currency is certainly not a course to be deliberately and needlessly embarked upon.

In an American devaluation program we have to assume one more miracle. When devaluation was carried out in France and Germany, bonds were payable in terms of currency, and were automatically scaled down with everything else. But since the scare of 1896 nearly all bonds in the United States have been payable in terms of gold. If you take almost any American bond, public or private, you will find that it is payable "in gold coin of the United States

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of America, of or equal to the standard of weight and fineness as it existed on"—the date of issuance of the bond. Here is a "sacred" contract, a private contract. Would the courts—would, specifically and finally, the members of the Supreme Court—permit Congress to declare that such a contract could be put aside—that the bond could be paid in currency and not in gold? If every judge thought of economic consequences as Justice Brandeis does, it is imaginable that such gold contracts, after devaluation, might be declared null and void because their fulfilment would be contrary to public policy. It is imaginable that the Supreme Court would hold that, just as an individual corporation in bankruptcy must have its debts scaled down, regardless of its previous contracts, so must a nation when it would otherwise face general bankruptcy. It is imaginable, but not probable. For it is in general the pride of the legal mind that it decides on precedent and "principle," and maintains an Olympian unconcern regarding the mere social consequences of its decisions. Only five justices would need to be legalistic to assure that one of the most important parts of the program of devaluation would be defeated. But if the resulting blow to a program of devaluation would be serious, it would not be fatal. We should still have the enormous advantage of a price recovery, and of a consequent restoration of business activity; and at least the otherwise crushing mortgage burden on farms and other real estate would be diminished. The heavy bonded indebtedness on corporations and on federal, State, and municipal governments would at least be no greater in its real burden than it is now. It would be greater merely in terms of the new dollar, and we could still find a partial remedy even for this through a special tax. If the devaluation amounted to 33⅓ per cent, for example, the federal government could place a tax of 33⅓ per cent on all receipts—whether of interest or principal—representing the fulfilment of gold contracts made before the date of devaluation. Such a tax would be no more "discriminatory" than the excise tax on tobacco; it would take away nothing but windfall profits. And though it would not help to relieve the burden on those saddled with gold debts, it would at least secure social justice by preventing gold creditors from profiteering. It would, incidentally—for such a tax could be deducted at the source—bring in very heavy federal revenues.

Whether or not America embarks upon a policy of currency devaluation, the course of prices and events in the next six months should decide. If the recovery that the Administration and business leaders have been predicting for the last two years should finally come in that period of itself, then a major operation on the gold dollar might be unnecessary. And just as a physician usually tries every possible less drastic remedy before resorting to a major operation, so must we. The two outstanding remedies that are less drastic are the scaling down of tariffs and the cancelation of reparations and war debts. These two measures should in any case be taken *first*. If in themselves they should bring about sufficient revival, devaluation could be avoided; and if devaluation were resorted to without them, it might prove in the end abortive, for after the initial recovery, prohibitive tariffs and crushing war debts could only bring another period of strangulation.

The Future of Opera in America

By WINTHROP SERGEANT

THE announcement, on March 24, by the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Opera Company that it is sustaining a loss of $550,000 for the current season, despite the voluntary contribution by artists and administrative staff of 10 per cent of their salaries, and that that loss will wipe out the entire capital of the opera company, makes the situation of the Metropolitan extremely critical. Whether it will be able to continue for another season depends upon whether the additional necessary funds can be obtained and vital savings made in management, together with further cuts in salaries. The task of the directors will not be made easier by the high income taxes provided in the pending tax bill, since it is from the very rich that the opera is chiefly supported and the huge deficits are met. They are bound to feel the pinch. It may well be that, unless prosperity returns promptly and income taxes are reduced, there will be a temporary cessation of the Metropolitan Opera. What is true of the Metropolitan situation is also true of the other great American opera companies, Chicago and Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, however, there still seems to be a great deal of life, and for some months past there have been negotiations between the Philadelphia company and the Rockefeller-Roxy organization which is planning a new opera house in Radio City. It will be remembered that the offer of a permanent connection between the Metropolitan and Radio City was rejected by the former. Leopold Stokowski, the Philadelphia conductor, has gone so far as to announce that a series of guest performances in Radio City has already been planned by his organization, which would mean very serious competition for the Metropolitan in its own territory. It may well be that the grave financial plight of the Metropolitan will now compel it to take up again the Rockefeller offer, perhaps as a last resort.

With all sympathy for the Metropolitan directors, and with full recognition of their magnificent generosity during all these years, it is none the less true that their troubles are in part their own fault. Long before the present economic depression the Metropolitan had fallen far below its earlier standards, so that there have been growing unrest and dissatisfaction among the subscribers and increasingly sharp comments on the institution on the part of the critics. It is true that it has continued to bring to New York a distinguished array of European singers, many of them of first excellence. But stars alone do not make an opera company. In fact, the star system, pushed to extremes, can go a long way toward ruining one. Stars are expensive; only one or two can be used at a time. The other parts of a production must be filled out with lesser singers, and the lesser singers of the Metropolitan have not, in recent years, been of very high quality. In relatively simple virtuoso operas of the

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"Tosca" variety this shortcoming is not so noticeable, but it is a long time since the Metropolitan has been equipped to give an adequate performance of Mozart's "Don Giovanni," for example. This particular opera requires three really first-rate basses on the stage at the same time. And for all operas of the "Don Giovanni" type, which are as fragile and as subtly constructed as the finest chamber music, the Metropolitan's method is further ruinous in that it too often reduces what should be a balanced musical whole into a blatant contest for vocal supremacy.

But leaving aside for the moment the question of the stars, let us consider those more modest elements which really form the permanent bread-and-butter basis of any operatic organization. It is here that the greatest inadequacies of the company are to be found. The orchestra, and this is nothing short of scandalous at a time when thousands of first-rate musicians are available, is of a routine variety. It has nothing in common with that group of artists which functioned in the pit of the opera house fifteen or twenty years ago. And the conditions under which the members are forced to work are such that even a first-rate organization would have difficulty in keeping up its standard of performance. The Metropolitan's chorus is appallingly mediocre. It lacks both vocal vitality and physical mobility. As to the ballet—there is really a tragic element in the fact that supposedly progressive New York audiences will tolerate such an antediluvian hodge-podge as is offered them at the Metropolitan, when their city is teeming with a significant modern dance movement led by struggling American dancers with both ability and ideas.

The Metropolitan's scenic settings are often of the dowdy and overstuffed type that disappeared from our animate theaters with the era of hoop skirts and horse cars. Here again the financial hypothesis is commonly advanced as an excuse. The task of resetting all the productions of the opera house would indeed be formidable and expensive, but even the new productions offered at the Metropolitan each season are invariably staged in the same outmoded manner. In this matter the "Met" might well profit by observing the scenery of any of the better Broadway reviews. The reason for this particular artistic backwardness must lie deeply imbedded in the attitude of the management, for it is noticeable that even such gifted designers as Robert Edmund Jones never quite manage to get a really good example of their work on the stage at Broadway and Thirty-ninth Street.

In the Philadelphia Grand Opera Company, on the other hand, Radio City is dealing with a living organization which has strong roots in the contemporary movement and a consciousness of its responsibility toward the future of art in America. Too long has the Metropolitan proceeded on the assumption that opera, as its new president recently somewhat cynically remarked, is "the last of our Victorian institutions." This remark might well be applied to the Metropolitan Opera House itself, but as a theory of opera in general it has been most emphatically disproved. The recent performances of "Wozzeck" by the Philadelphia company have shown, irrespective of one's attitude toward "Wozzeck" as an individual work, that opera is far from being a dying institution, and that there are still groups of enthusiastic artists who are willing to take up its cause with courage.

The Philadelphia Opera Company has behind it, considering the short time that it has been in existence, a remarkable record of achievement. Instead of pussyfooting with unimportant and sure-fire novelties of the "Schwanda" and "Zoraima" categories, it has had the courage to try out modern works of a downright controversial and highly interesting character, and to make them "go down." It has allied itself with progressive elements in the musical and theatrical world. It has sought to make the production rather than the star the center of its artistic efforts, and it has not only opened its doors freely to the American singer but has made him the backbone of its production, attaining thereby an organic connection with the soil on which it grows.

It has its shortcomings, too. Its ballet department, for one thing, is not up to the standard of its other component parts. But its orchestra, consisting at present of members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, plus a scattering of Curtis Institute apprentices, is of excellent quality, and its chorus and general stage management compare very favorably with those of the Metropolitan. Far outweighing any of these technical advantages, however, is the progressive and up-to-date attitude of its management. The intimate connection between the Philadelphia Opera Company and the Curtis Institute is another point in its favor. America has long been in need of some sort of bridge between its music-educational institutions and the realities of its professional music life. Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles to the normal development of competent American musicians in the past has been the lack of a helping hand at that crucial point when the student seeks to feel his way into that very terrifying world of foreign languages and bewildering competition in which his future is laid. The Philadelphia organization is able, in some measure, to meet this difficulty by furnishing the Curtis Institute with a direct outlet.

That Leopold Stokowski is growing tired of the routine of symphony conducting and would welcome a change to a perhaps less pure but, from the experimental point of view, more exciting form of activity has been obvious to the concert-going public for some time. Those productions in which he has taken most pride in recent seasons have all been of the non-symphonic variety, and more and more he has let his interest wander into the operatic field. While some may question the aesthetic immaculateness of Mr. Stokowski's ideals, there is no doubt that the operatic field has everything to gain from the entrance into it of this vigorous personality. In his stage productions with the Philadelphia Orchestra during the past two or three years he has presented premières of several outstanding contemporary works. He has a flair for the stage that bids fair to outweigh his qualities as a symphonic leader. His guest appearance with the opera company in "Wozzeck" revealed his competence in this field, and he is known to be vitally interested in the performances that have been planned for Radio City. With Stokowski as principal conductor of the Philadelphia Grand Opera Company a new era in our operatic productions might come about. At any rate, the result would be bound to stir the New York operatic audience from its customary apathy, and we should find out once and for all whether it is true that opera is "the last of our Victorian institutions," and whether "complete confidence" in, and "high esteem" for, the methods of Mr. Gatti-Casazza are after all productive of the highest type of operatic art that we can realize.

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Presidential Possibilities

VI. Murray—Possible but Not Likely*

By GEORGE MILBURN

"A MAN too honest to be bought, too wise to be fooled, and too brave to be intimidated." That is the formula for a United States President propounded by William Henry Murray, late Sage of Tishomingo, present Governor of Oklahoma, and future God knows what. He spent more than a year in telling the country that it needed such a man, but it was not until February 20, 1932, that he overcame a coyness strange in one who is so patently courageous and announced that *he* was the man who combined all of those virtues and that he was available for the Presidency. If there is any other statesman in America who has that rare blend of honesty and wisdom and bravery, Governor Murray thus far has overlooked him.

Murray's honesty has been questioned, but it has never been disproved. Murray's wisdom has been impugned, but it has been more often praised. And Murray's bravery—no one has ever entertained any doubt about Murray's bravery. It took courage for him to establish his quixotic Bolivian colony and to stick with it through five years of failure. It took courage for him to come back a beaten man and to enter a political campaign against incredible odds to become Governor of Oklahoma by the greatest majority that the State has ever known. It took courage for him to close the Red River toll bridges, open the free bridges, defy federal-court injunctions, shut down the oil fields for the purpose of raising the price of oil. But it took more courage, and he took more time summoning it, for him to become candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination, with flimsy newspaper notoriety and little else to run on.

If there had been a Lindbergh kidnapping or a Sino-Japanese war in the summer of 1931, of course Alfalfa Bill Murray would not have been widely known outside the borders of his own State, and it is not likely that, without broad publicizing, he would ever have been seduced into making the national campaign. But it happened that his spectacular bridge war and his even more sensational military shut-down of oil production came in a summer news lull. Whereas, ordinarily, he would have got a few paragraphs in the news-oddities column on page fourteen, he was given day after day the right-hand front-page column with streamers. It was this heady publicity that converted his dreamy hankering after the Presidency, a feeling strange to no politician, into strong ambition. These magnified news stories and the "thousands of letters . . . received from all walks of life, from all sections of the country" induced Murray to announce for the Presidency. "It would require $5,000,000," he calculated on the day of his formal coming forth, "for any other man nominated by the party to be so favorably known among the rank and file of voters who elect tickets."

Murray himself admits frankly that he has scant knowledge of news values, and his weekly organ, the *Blue Valley Farmer*, which he owns and for which he writes, makes this credible. None of the news breaks of his administration have occurred in it. The Governor, at times, has even gone so far as to curtail news, and his gracious posing for photographers and his congenial press conferences seem to have been prompted, until recently, by his fondness for dramatics rather than by any appreciation of publicity values. Every press outlet in Oklahoma has been hostile to him from the beginning. So his name became familiar to thousands of newspaper readers over the country, not through any conscious maneuvering for publicity, but through the accident of there being no other live news at the time. The Governor of Oklahoma realizes how shaky is this foundation for national prominence quite as well as the various political observers who have solemnly discussed the remoteness of his chances at the Democratic convention next summer. "I'm not overexcited about victory in the convention," he chuckles complacently, "but I'll say what I damn please and I'll have a bushel of fun."

His greatest obstacle, he says, and the one that probably will prove insurmountable is the "Wall Street gang." There is no doubt about his positive belief in this barrier, or, for that matter, about its existence, but it is also true that Murray has only the most slipshod campaign organization, that he has scarcely any campaign funds at all, that he knows hardly anything about national politics, and that he is confronted everywhere with a curiosity incited by caricatures that is cruelly deceptive in its resemblance to popularity. This last was true in North Dakota, where farmers drove through blizzards to hear him speak and where he was greeted at every performance by cordial howling demonstrations and assurances that the State was for him two to one. His reception was so impressive that cautious political observers were on the verge of conceding Murray the State's preference. But the final vote—greatly augmented by Roosevelt Republicans—was two to one against him.

Such a setback, however, offers only the slightest discouragement to Alfalfa Bill. He drives on with his rickety, patched-up machine, and the well-oiled working of his opponents' does not dismay him. He is off again on his erratic, ill-routed tours. Oklahoma sees little of him these days. He keeps up his country-newspaper appeals for small contributions and his campaign manager has evolved an outlandish plan for selling novelties to raise funds—Alfalfa Bill plaster busts, hatbands, fezzes, buttons, and tire-covers. So bravery is the charitable word at any rate for a man who travels up and down the land offering himself for the Presidency in the face of such difficulties. And that same quality will carry Alfalfa Bill into the Chicago nominating convention with the forlorn twenty-two votes that his Oklahoma machine has already pledged him. Once there and given an opportunity to get under way, he might stir them with an old-fashioned spellbinder, but his real hope is to have a part in writing the platform. "I'll write a platform," he says, "that will scuttle

* The sixth of a series of articles. The seventh, on Newton D. Baker, by Oswald Garrison Villard, will appear in next week's issue.—EDITOR THE NATION.

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the ship of any Wall Street candidate, even if I have to bring in a minority report."

So the wisdom in his strenuous preliminary campaign is perhaps open to question. But when one discusses Murray's wisdom one finds oneself on debatable ground—even more debatable than that of his honesty. One may say that he is a sage, a clown; a charlatan, a humanitarian; a radical, a conservative; and find support for any one of those characters in his actions. But he is above all—and that should endear him to America—a pragmatist. If a slick dodge works—all right. What difference does it make why or how it works? And if it doesn't work, forget it. This direct action, of course, made him famous. Alfalfa Bill cuts Gordian knots. Sometimes he does, that is. Sometimes he fails. But the country at large has been very generous in making much of his successes and overlooking his failures. He did not get dollar oil, but the price, for some reason, did come back up from twelve cents a barrel to sixty-six cents. The country heard about it. He made a spectacular "fire-bell" campaign to get certain amendments to the State constitution that the legislature would not pass, and the voters defeated his measures overwhelmingly. The remarkable thing is that Governor Murray gets what he goes out after as often as he does. Any person who followed closely the Oklahoma gubernatorial campaign in 1930 would hesitate to laugh at him for entering the Presidential race this year.

Moreover, his speeches sometimes reveal him as a sober and solid fellow, much less the fire-eater than conscientious voters have been given to suppose. He is alarmed by radical theory, lumping communism with anarchy, reads no magazine except the *Saturday Evening Post,* and drawls out such platitudes as "It is up to the Democratic Party to return to the fundamentals" as impressively as if they were original observations. Often enough he is eminently sane, and one of his fondest and often reiterated boasts is that he is the only Presidential candidate with a platform. He takes some 5,000 words in this to propose, in addition to the usual deploring: (1) installation of the decentralized Scotch banking system; (2) coinage of gold and silver in sufficient quantities to meet normal demands; (3) graduated State and national income-tax system, with highest rates on excess salaries paid to corporation officers; (4) pledging of Congress to impeach federal judges who abuse injunctive powers in violation of the Eleventh Amendment; (5) construction of a Nicaraguan canal; (6) special encouragement of Latin American trade; (7) abolition or limitation of ad valorem taxes on homes and farms; (8) armament and army reduction, conscription of both men and property in case of war; (9) revision of tariff to equal only difference of cost at home and abroad; (10) Congressional action to permit leagues of States to make treaties with the federal government the better to handle such regional questions as that of oil; (11) immediate payment of the soldiers' bonus.

There is little in his platform that is new enough to need explanation, but that curiously reminiscent high light about the Nicaraguan canal is significant. It calls to mind Murray's closest prototype in political history. Whatever resemblance Alfalfa Bill has to Lincoln, to whom he so persistently compares himself, is vague; and so is his resemblance to Jackson, to whom others have compared him. But he has many of Theodore Roosevelt's characteristics, and while he does not say so, he seems to have been deeply influenced by that champing executive. This explains Murray's imperialistic attitude. And while he probably knows more about South America than any other candidate, his comments on European affairs are incredibly naive. When he visited Washington last January, reporters began questioning him about disarmament, reparations, international debts, and so on. The Governor was soon in a frightful muddle and made one blunder after another. After the press conference was over, he exclaimed, "Didn't those fellows hand me a packet, though!"

Governor Murray, nevertheless, is quite evidently a man who does his own thinking, and if he does not always arrive automatically at the right conclusion, as he supposes he does, at least he has proved on more than one occasion that his mind is shrewd and alert. There is no indication that the United States has had any intellectual heavyweights for President lately, and Murray is probably as capable of governing the country as any one of them. His scholarship, to be sure, has been somewhat exaggerated. Although he has read widely, he has that hodge-podge of curious, irrelevant information that often bespeaks the self-educated man. But he is much more intelligent, has more poise and dignity, and is more judicious in his decisions than the popular image of him allows.

It is this phase of his character that his enemies unconsciously admit when they speak of Alfalfa Bill Murray as a blatant demagogue. Demagoguery is the most convincing charge that has ever been brought against his honesty, and Murray has a disarming way of admitting the allegation, furnishing at the same time his own definition of demagogue, which is not in the least derogatory. However Machiavellian his method, no one has ever been able to prove conclusively that he is not sincere in his "profound sense of duty to the great middle class and the little man." He has repeatedly shown a genuine concern about human misery, and one or two of his defeated "fire-bell" measures were honest attempts to correct some of the most flagrant social ills in Oklahoma. When a gas company cuts off 500 families, leaving them without fuel in the bitterest cold of winter, Murray, ordering the militia to stand by, sees to it that the gas is turned on before nightfall. When the Oklahoma City police descend on river-bottom squatters, hauling them from their squalid huts on vagrancy charges, Murray pardons them as fast as they are arrested. There are many such instances of his humanity. And yet no man can be more vindictive. He practices the spoils system in an absolutely ruthless manner, explaining naively that any man who supported him is bound to be more capable than the man who did not. The Oklahoma Statehouse at present teems with hatred between Murray and certain of his aids whom he is powerless to remove.

None who knows would say that he could be influenced by money. It is inconceivable that he could be bought. He has always been scrupulously honest in financial matters, even to paying back the money lost by his cohorts in the ill-starred Bolivian venture. He has scorned offers of large campaign funds. The daily newspapers of Oklahoma, his relentless enemies, by insinuation rather than by direct charge, have often tried to find some evidence of bribe-taking in his administration. Failing in that, they turned to charges of extortion. It was said that racketeering methods were being used by Murray's paper, the *Blue Valley Farmer,* to get adver-

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tising, but the firms who bought space in the paper came forth with proof that it was a very profitable medium. Murray, proud of his weekly's 80,000 paid circulation, says that he would discharge immediately any employee found guilty of coercion, and Murray can be believed. He has an honesty of expression, for all his playing to the mob, and this plain talk has not always served him well in politics. It was a Democratic year in 1916, and Murray could easily have been returned to Congress; but he chose instead to point out the insincerity of the Wilson slogan "He Kept Us Out of War," and so lost his place. He has not changed since that day. He can still go to Washington to address the Anti-Saloon League and tell them that he favors local option, refusing at the same time to be labeled as a wet candidate, simply because he believes that prohibition is not a Presidential campaign issue and that it would be dishonest to use it as such.

It is possible that this same honesty will make him a figure of more than minor importance at the Democratic National Convention. Few persons, other than some of his most fanatical followers in Oklahoma, believe that he has the slightest chance of getting the nomination, but there is no reason why the Democratic Party should not find in him a valuable man. He hopes to have a hand in writing the platform. He has pledged himself to "make no trade, form no combination, nor any compromise on principle for the delegation or the nomination." As for his Presidential candidacy, he is more philosophical about that. "I feel reasonably certain of election if nominated," he drawls, "but if I'm not nominated I shall have escaped a herculean task and an awful responsibility." So the Democratic convention had better be nice to Alfalfa Bill. No matter what candidate the Democrats choose, they will probably be needing Oklahoma next November.

The Tariff Victory in Britain

By J. A. HOBSON

BRITAIN'S gallant and serviceable policy of open ports for world trade, maintained for upwards of eighty years, has now collapsed before the assaults of reactionary economic nationalism. The Impost Duties Act, imposing a tax of 10 per cent upon all classes of goods, with a few exceptions in foods and raw materials, is the framework of a coming tariff more comprehensive and more complex than that of any other country. For not only is Britain dependent upon overseas supplies for a far larger proportion and variety of important goods than any other nation, but she must make her protection policy compatible with two other aims that are essentially opposed to a really "scientific tariff." The first is disclosed by the familiar opposition between the policy of keeping out goods which can be made at home and that of getting revenue for letting them in. The second is peculiar to the British case, the insistence upon crossing economic nationalism with imperialism by means of preferences and exemptions to our overseas Empire which conflict with protective efficacy and diminish tariff revenue. How to reconcile those inconsistencies is the chief problem with which the Tariff Advisory Committee, now appointed to assist the government in filling up the framework of this fatuous policy, will be confronted. The chairman of this committee, Sir George May (formerly general secretary of the Prudential Insurance Company and during the war manager of the American Dollar Securities Committee), is the man whose alarmist "Economy Report," issued last summer, started the financial ramp against the Labor Government which led to its collapse and shook the country off gold. These high services doubtless recommend him to this government as the fittest architect of reactionary finance discernible outside the ranks of committed politicians.

Ten per cent is, of course, a low level, but the structure raised upon it by the exercise of log-rolling and wire-pulling may become a veritable skyscraper. The lobbying by which various industries seek to get high duties upon competing foreign goods, while at the same time putting their imported materials on the free list, is already in active operation, and the principles of members of Parliament are being subjected to all the temptations and pressures with which American students of fiscal politics will be familiar. It will, however, be several months before the full shape of the tariff emerges from the policy of push and pull. For the Imperial Conference at Ottawa lies several months ahead, and its deliberations (is that quite the word?) must materially affect the final form. That conference will be an interesting spectacle. For it can hardly succeed in hiding the falseness of the pretense of a self-sufficient economic empire, which furnishes the sentimental backing of our new fiscal scheme. The Empire is to have enlarged and guaranteed free markets for its surplus foods and raw materials, foreign competitors being kept out by high duties. But is Britain to have free empire markets for her export trade in manufactured goods? This is the vital question for our depressed and unemployed trades. What answer will be given by Canada and the other dominions? Will they be willing to remove the duties they impose upon our goods and to slacken their efforts to develop their own manufactures, or will they merely continue and perhaps extend their present preferences for goods they are not yet equipped to produce themselves, and which cannot be supplied much cheaper or better from the United States or Germany? I venture to prophesy that the need for satisfying the sentimental imperialism of the "upper classes" in Britain will be so successfully exploited by the realists of our dominions that the "quid" we shall get "pro quo" will not bear close examination. One thing, however, our protectionists will secure. Arrangements will be made with our dominions of so binding a character as to make it evident that our protection policy is not the temporary expedient which Liberal and Labor supporters at the polls pretended to believe, but a permanent fiscal system which a future government of Britain will not be competent to change without the consent of our dominions. This new revolutionary check upon the control of Parliament is not yet adequately realized. But it constitutes a really dangerous aspect of the future status of our government.

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How does the country take this change in its commercial and industrial policy? For the most part with an almost stoical indifference. Business is almost everywhere so bad, the incomes of most grades of employees are so diminished and so precarious, that people are disposed to say, "Well, things can hardly be much worse, so any change may be for the better." I here speak of the majority of non-politicians and non-economists. It is no wonder that in such a depressed atmosphere the convinced enthusiasts of protection should have prevailed. They had waited long for this opportunity. Any time since Joseph Chamberlain revived the issue thirty years ago and dressed it out in bright imperial colors, free trade might have gone under, given a favorable conjunction of two forces—a powerful independent Conservative majority and a sufficiently bad economic depression. This conjunction was only effected in the fall of last year by means of the half-organized, half-blind financial crisis. Our protectionists were then given the opportunity for which they had waited so long. Who can blame them for seizing it or for their haste in execution?

It may be true, of course, that some of the Liberals and Laborites entangled in this folly were deceived at the election by the two pretenses that the government they were going to put in was for a brief emergency, and that the tariff policy which they supported was only a policy of inquiry, not of immediate committal. Some of them now stand aghast at the discovery that no inquiry is required, except the inquiry as to the size of the duties accorded to the protectionist interests, and that every care is taken to secure the permanence of the fiscal change. The free-trade orations of Sir Herbert Samuel and Lord Snowden, exposing all the heavy fallacies of the tariff doctrine, were excellent musket practice with blank cartridges. Here were these champions of Cobdenism, protesting the ruinous results of the Impost Duties Bill and the related policy adumbrated for protecting agriculture at the expense of the consumer, knowing that they were licensed to make these futile protests in order to preserve the façade of a National Government, but not daring to make their protest effective by the only step that could impress the country—resignation. The National Laborites might be excused, for, with a few exceptions, like Lord Snowden, neither their leaders nor the rank and file of their party had ever been enthusiastic or convinced adherents of free trade, though few had tampered actively with protection. No, the moral tragedy of the situation is the sight and voice of Mr. Runciman speaking for the Board of Trade, and half the slender corps of Liberals in the House of Commons voting the abandonment of the policy which for a century had been the backbone of liberalism amid all the chances and changes of political life. The educational campaign of thirty years ago, when the gospel of free trade was preached throughout the land by such doughty exponents as Mr. Asquith and Mr. Winston Churchill, seems to have left no traces on the mind of today's electorate. A new generation has arisen that knew not Joseph Chamberlain and the intellectual fiasco of his new protectionism.

The muddled presentation of the tariff case in Parliament is a just reflection of the mind of the nation. It might, indeed, be claimed that this muddled mind belongs to our traditional policy of "muddling through" all the difficult situations in which we find ourselves. So some supporters of tariffs contend that they will not raise prices, because a secure home market will enable business to organize production and marketing so as to reduce costs, while others admit that prices may rise, but then, is not the present low level of prices a grave obstacle to trade revival? Some admit that the removal of foreign competition might lead to slackness and inefficiency, but others insist that the administration of this tariff will refuse aid to industries which contain such defects. The old arguments of the utility of a tariff for negotiation and for retaliation are confidently set out, regardless of the damning proofs which history presents of their futility. So likewise we are told that foreign businesses are already planning to set up factories within our tariff walls which will employ British labor and enlarge the volume of production in the country, though the increasing costs of such production that must show themselves when the tariff is fully operative will cancel the advantages of any such attempt of foreign firms to capture our market from within.

But though experience may teach us the lessons which we ought to have learned from observation of protection in other countries, those lessons may be so obscured and overlaid by other critical events that it may take our people a long time before they can throw off the shackles they have so foolishly allowed to be put upon them. The present forces of reaction are extremely powerful. The older forces of free trade, the bankers, the shipping trade, the great export industries, are divided and hesitant. Large support is found for emergency protection in what were formerly the free-trade strongholds of the North. But though grievously smitten, free trade is not mortally wounded. Recovery is possible. A sharp rise of prices of food and other working-class necessaries with no abatement of recent wage cuts and no enlargement of employment, taken in conjunction with the reduction of income tax understood to be contained in the forthcoming budget, will open the eyes of the electorate to the real meaning of the Tory victory of last fall, of which they were the innocent instruments. They will then realize the significance of a famous sentence of Sir Thomas More, when capitalism was just beginning its triumphant political career: "Everywhere do I perceive a certain conspiracy of rich men seeking their own advantage under the name and pretext of the Commonwealth." But what can they do about it? Since the practical decease of liberalism, free traders must organize and educate and agitate through whatever channels are open to them. Bodies like the Cobden Club, the Free Trade Union, and the definitely free-trade survivors of the Liberal Party can do much missionary work, but the still powerful Labor Party in the country must form the main support in any effective rally of free trade. And for that work it is essential that they shall come to recognize, as they have not heretofore, that protection is a chief weapon of that profiteering policy which they identify with capitalism, and that, as Socialists, they must deal with it by a constructive economic policy.

That is surely the lesson to be learned from recent happenings. Liberal free trade has fallen, because it continued to belong to a laissez faire competitive economy, whose day had passed. The restoration of free trade belongs to a conscious scheme of organized world-planning, the necessity of which is just beginning to win recognition and the foundations of which are just beginning to be laid. The future security and progress of the world depend upon whether these foundations can be "well and truly laid."

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Bankers and Bread Lines in Toledo*

By MAURITZ A. HALLGREN

Toledo, March 21

TOLEDO has in proportion to its population one of the longest bread lines in the country. Relief is distributed by the municipality on a bread-line rather than a grocery-order basis, that is to say, the families of the jobless cannot go to grocery stores and other places to select their own food, as is done in almost all other cities, but must go to the city relief stations and take the packages of food already prepared for them there. Nevertheless, it must be said that the city is doing the job well, even efficiently, so mechanically indeed that there is little of the milk of human kindness or human feeling to be found in the process. But the story of Toledo's municipal bread line does not lie entirely in this machine-like distribution of relief. It runs back through ten or more years of a bankers' war, which was precipitated by the desire of a Toledo automobile company to smash a labor union. The industrial-financial duel also fed upon a real-estate boom that was, to put the matter baldly, a technically legal form of racketeering not only tolerated by the supposedly conservative bankers of the town, but enthusiastically financed by them. Last summer came the crash, and all but one of the large banks closed their doors. Today one-fifth of Toledo is on the dole.

There can be little doubt that the economic depression would in any event have laid this city low. Toledo is an automobile town. The principal factory is that of the Willys-Overland Company, which normally employs upwards of 10,000 men. At present the Overland plant provides work a few days a week for less than 3,000 men. There are 1,100 other factories and shops, most of which, when times are good, make automobile parts. But times are bad and many of these plants are now standing idle. In a sense Toledo had been catching the overflow from Detroit, and when operations in the automobile industry dropped to 30 or 40 per cent of capacity Toledo suffered along with its more vigorous neighbor to the north. Nevertheless, industry here is not so highly integrated as in Detroit; it is broken down into many more small units; and so Toledo managed to offer more resistance to the shock when it first came. Low wages—labor in this open-shop community has been exploited almost as thoroughly as in the steel and coal industries—also stood the factory-owners in good stead. Production costs were kept down and profits up, and the factories were able, or should have been, to set aside comfortably large reserves to tide themselves over the present black years. Again, the notoriously low wages proved a temporary boon to Toledo when Henry Ford in one of his cost-cutting moods decided to shut down several departments in his own plants and farm the work out to some of the local "sweatshops."

But Toledo does not depend solely on the automobile industry. It is an important transportation center, has the largest clover-seed market in the country, refines a great deal of sugar and roasts even more coffee, is a grain and milling center, has several large glass and glass-product factories, some of which have remained fairly prosperous through the depression, and, lastly, is a leading bond market, the volume of business of its sixteen bond houses in normal years often running as high as $500,000,000. This last explains a good deal, for Toledo's New Economic Era was built largely upon real-estate bonds and mortgages. In any case such diversification was of considerable help to the community when the automobile industry began to bog down. It is not that the unemployment situation here was not critical before the bank crash—the first effects of unemployment were felt as early as October, 1929—but the local situation could have been immeasurably worse. Today it is worse, much worse, thanks to the bankers' war and the resultant panic of last summer.

The labor troubles at the Overland plant a decade ago had two results: the machinists' union was destroyed, and the automobile company was put on the block. Eastern financial interests acquired control, but apparently Wall Street was at that time not so deeply interested in the automobile industry as it was later to become, and the prize was allowed to slip back to Toledo, where two banking groups reached out simultaneously to grab it. The methods usual in such contests were resorted to: banks were merged, deals were made and unmade, reputations were blackened—for all of which the community was later to pay. One group was headed by Henry L. Thompson, now president of the Toledo Trust Company; the other by George M. Jones, president of the defunct Ohio Savings Bank and Trust Company. Jones won the first round when he captured control of Willys-Overland. But the wounds of that battle were never allowed to heal.

So far as Toledo knew, early in 1931 its banks were in sound condition. It had for basis of its belief the statements issued by the banks as required by law. One such statement, after showing what appeared to be a safe margin of surplus and undivided profits for all the banks, asserted that "Toledo's seven State and two national banks weathered the critical year of 1930 and have embarked on a new year on a sound basis." On June 17, unfortunately, the Security-Home Trust Company, a combination of six merged banks, failed to open its doors. It was one of the big banks, its deposits totaling more than $25,000,000. Runs on several of the other banks followed immediately. As a measure of self-defense these other houses announced that they would apply the sixty-day withdrawal rule. But there was one notable exception. The Toledo Trust Company, Henry L. Thompson's bank, made no such announcement, though it had been generally expected that all the banks would act in unison so that no one of them would profit by the others' confession of weakness. The inevitable consequence was that depositors believed the Thompson bank to be safe, the others decidedly less so, and by the dozens and the scores depositors transferred their accounts to the Toledo Trust Company, or turned their deposits into cash, which they hid away in safe-deposit boxes.

The runs on the other banks continued through the summer. By early August numerous business houses, department

* The fourth of a series of articles by Mr. Hallgren on unemployment in various parts of the country.—EDITOR THE NATION.

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stores, and chain stores were sending their money out of town. By mid-August it was clear that a major operation would be necessary. Plans were worked out for a merger of the Ohio Bank (George M. Jones), the Commercial Savings Bank and Trust Company, and the Commerce–Guardian Trust and Savings Bank. About $20,000,000 in new capital was needed and virtually all this money was pledged. Some of it came from New York interests and some from the forced sale of securities. George Jones offered $4,500,000 from his personal fortune; Clem Mininger, a director of the Ohio Bank, said he would put $1,000,000 in the pool; and Henry Thompson, the only local banker not connected with the three houses that were to be saved by the merger, promised $1,500,000. A conference was held on August 15 in the Commodore Perry Hotel, at which New York, Chicago, and Toledo bankers were to agree upon details. Thirty-six hours later all three banks, which between them had thirty-four branches, were turned over to the State Superintendent of Banks, the merger having fallen through. The American Bank, owned by the American Flint Glass Workers' Union, came down in the crash with the rest. Toledo was left with only four banks—Thompson's and three small and unimportant houses.

What happened at the hotel conference, though it is not yet generally known in Toledo, is this: At the very last moment one of the participants withdrew his pledge, announcing that he would not go through with his agreement until a recognized firm of auditors had gone over the books of the three banks. That would have taken a week to ten days; the collapse of the banks was a matter of hours. And thus it came about that the Toledo Trust Company today dominates the local banking field. On the day after the crash officials of the Toledo Trust were reported by the local press as "jubilant" because they were receiving "many new accounts, a surprising amount of deposits." By December 31 the total deposits in the Toledo Trust had increased more than 10 per cent. Thompson was also quick to set up a number of branch banks, a field he had not entered before as it had been monopolized by the other banks.

The insolvent bankers have to a large degree only themselves to blame. The New Economic Era in Toledo had taken the form of a dizzy real-estate spree. Of the closed banks, only the Security–Home was found loaded down with shaky foreign investments, Central and South American bonds. The others were swamped with real-estate paper, mortgages and bonds on undeveloped and cheap residential property, notes against many of the small factories in town, personal loans against stocks of local corporations which were intended solely to enable the stockholders to recoup their losses in Wall Street. The outcome of this last kind of bank "investment" means, incidentally, that the ownership of many of Toledo's small factories and businesses now rests with the liquidators of the insolvent banks. But real-estate paper, something that the big commercial banks of New York and Chicago never touch, was the chief attraction for Toledo's commercial banks. More than 65 per cent of the "investments" of the Ohio Bank, for example, were found tied up in bonds and mortgages of this character.

Subconsciously hurt, no doubt, by the knowledge that its neighbors, Detroit and Cleveland, had grown much faster, Toledo had been giving all the aid and comfort it could to the real-estate boom. Subdividers had appeared, bought up huge chunks of raw acreage, laid out lots, put down thin macadam pavements, planted a few scrawny trees, and then sold the lots to all comers, whatever their references or financial standing, on the easy-payment plan. Development experts had followed, put up flimsy but arty-looking houses, sold them on the same basis, sometimes with no down payment, at prices two to four times the actual value of the houses. On the strength of the sales contracts the subdivision and development racketeers had gone to the banks and borrowed money. The racketeers could afford to be liberal because their profits never ran below 25 per cent on each deal—the rate of commission they are allowed to charge on real-estate transactions—and they got this commission coming and going, from the farmer for selling his land to the subdivider's private syndicate, and from the suckers who bought the lots from the syndicate, though actually the money came from the banks which took over the sales contracts and gave good currency in return for them. But the banks also profited, for the subdividers were perfectly willing to pay generously for their loans. Unhappily, real-estate paper, especially the sort that was circulating here, is not readily negotiable, and so when the pressure came, most of Toledo's banks found their assets frozen.

It is interesting to note that the Toledo Trust Company was the only important bank not caught in this speculative hysteria. Thompson says frankly that it has always been his policy to put only the safest and most conservative securities in his portfolios, though the margin of profit be uncomfortably narrow. Toledo Trust statements of the last several years bear out this contention. But a vice-president of one of the closed banks declared to me that this policy was not voluntarily adopted by Thompson. The Toledo Trust came late into the field. It had no commercial connections, the leading industries of the city being tied up with the other banks, and so it could do but a minimum of commercial banking business. All the best branch-bank sites had been taken by the other banks, and therefore the Toledo Trust deemed it unwise to spread out in that field. Lastly, the real-estate game was a monopoly of the other banks, and though the Thompson company advertised for real-estate business it got none of it. The Toledo Trust had to be satisfied with investing its money in Liberty bonds and similar securities. These pay very little, but they are handy to have around when depositors grow nervous. Thus the Toledo Trust rode out the storm because of its highly liquid condition, and the town profited by not being deprived of all its major banking facilities at a time when it needed them most.

However, the effect of the financial blizzard was severe enough. Business dropped almost to the vanishing-point within a few days. Many companies and shops went to the wall; scores of doctors, lawyers, and other professional people were bankrupt; and almost all the stockholders and employees of the banks lost everything they had. Bank employees here are compelled to subscribe for stock, paying for it out of their salaries. "We are not coerced," one employee confessed to me, "but we become awfully unpopular if we don't subscribe." Now these workers are being sued by the State under the law which makes stockholders liable for assessments to the full value of their stock. The double-liability assessments are slow in coming in, the stockholders for the most part being bankrupt themselves.

Obviously the collapse of the banks pressed hardest on

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the poorest classes of the city. The demand for relief has increased steadily, tremendously, since last August. One other consequence the panic had. It resulted in the election by an overwhelming majority of Addison Q. Thacher as Mayor of Toledo. Thacher, a marine engineer, had for years been ministering to the needs of homeless men. He had run a flophouse and soup kitchen, devoting much of his time and his money to this cause. He was also something of a prize-fight promoter, having brought the Dempsey-Willard match to Toledo in 1919, which was not so palatable to many of the good people of the community. But the local rebellion that followed the bank crash was so potent that he was swept into office last November on a landslide vote. Under Ohio law the cities must finance their own relief. Until January 1 of this year, when Thacher took office, the Social Service Federation took all applications for relief, investigated them, and in cases of need issued grocery orders to the families. These orders were redeemable at the local stores, which in turn were supposed to be reimbursed by the city. However, the city allowed the bills to run up so that by the end of last year it owed the grocers more than $500,000. No one knows when this debt can or will be paid; no provision for discharging it is being made by the city government.

Mayor Thacher appointed Elwood A. Rowsey, a Presbyterian minister, to be welfare director, and Harold A. Nelson, an electrical engineer, to be commissioner of warehouses. Under their supervision a commissary system has been erected. Nelson buys all the food that is to be distributed. Carloads of it roll into the city warehouses every day. There it is weighed and packaged, and stowed into paper sacks which a fleet of motor trucks hauls out to the distributing stations every morning. A staff of dietitians has worked out a schedule whereby every family according to its size gets precisely the amount of calories, vitamins, carbohydrates, proteins, and so forth that it needs. This schedule has been reduced to a scale showing how much each family of each size or class is to get; so many pounds of meat go into the packages for this class, and so many ounces or fractional ounces of cheese into packages for another class, no more, no less. The fare never varies; no consideration is given to the national diets of the many Hungarian, Polish, French, and other alien families on the relief rolls, though diabetic and other ailing persons get special attention. The food is of the plainest—nourishing no doubt, but dishearteningly monotonous. However, buying in carload lots at less than wholesale prices has effected a considerable saving. The average family costs the city $2.14 a week, or about 6 cents per day per adult person.

The city warehouse, a seven-story building furnished rent free by a hardware company that has moved out of Toledo, resembles some of the commissary stations of the American Service of Supplies behind the lines in France during the war. One gets the impression as one wanders through the huge rooms that an entire army is being fed, and this impression is not entirely erroneous, for between 50,000 and 60,000 persons are being supplied with food from this plant. About 250 men work in the warehouse, opening crates, moving boxes, packing vegetables and other articles. They are the unemployed, selected for their appearance, who are appointed to these jobs. They work without compensation, of course, and each man reports for work only one day a week. On the basis of the city wage scale for unskilled labor—60 cents an hour—these men are giving $4.80 worth of labor every week in return for $2.14 worth of food. Yet it must be acknowledged that if the city had to pay for their labor many of them would get no food at all.

Last November the voters approved a special tax levy of $600,000 to pay for this relief. All of the special fund is going into food. The Social Service Federation, financed by contributions to the Community Chest, meets the other expenses of relief, such, for example, as the cost of investigating the cases of applicants. But at the present rate of expenditure, which is more than $100,000 a month, the special fund will be exhausted before July 1, though it was intended to cover a year of operations. There is little hope of getting additional funds through increased taxation; taxes here as elsewhere are difficult to collect. The stringent State laws make it hard for municipalities to raise money through bond issues; Ohio regulates municipal expenditures much more strictly than it does banking activities. Toledo could perhaps float a $600,000 bond issue if it were assured of a market, which it certainly is not, but even this would require a special act of the legislature. The State is in no better position to help. Its constitution limits State bonded indebtedness to $750,000, and this limit has already been exceeded by more than $200,000. Further extensions would require an amendment to the constitution, and the voters showed last fall, in rejecting a special bond issue for other welfare purposes, that they do not care to increase the tax burden on real estate, which would result from an increase in the State's indebtedness. Last week representatives from the seven largest Ohio cities met in Columbus to discuss the relief problem. They said that $20,000,000 at the very least would be needed in the immediate future. They proposed that 75 per cent of the revenues from the State gasoline tax, which would amount to approximately $20,000,000, be diverted to the cities for this purpose. But they came away without hope. The gasoline-tax revenues are specifically marked for the construction of roads; most of these roads will be built in the rural districts, thus benefiting primarily the farmers, and the farmers still control the legislature in this State.

Toledo is dragging along for the moment. It has pruned expenses wherever that has proved possible. All city employees, including the police and firemen, but excepting skilled and unskilled labor, have had to take salary cuts running up to 25 per cent. Dozens of civil-service positions have been abolished. The staffs of a number of municipal agencies have been skeletonized and their services curtailed; this affects primarily the winter recreation program, the health division, electrical inspection, fire prevention, water-waste survey, park maintenance, drawbridge operation, and engineering. Other agencies have been combined—the sanitary police with the food inspectors, and the fire and police alarm systems. The city-plan office has been closed and the division of public buildings abolished. The vocational school, too, has been closed. Vacancies in the police and fire departments are not being filled. More than a million dollars of the city's funds as well as the deposits of numerous charity agencies are tied up in the insolvent banks. Toledo is paying heavily for the incompetence of its bankers. Nevertheless, it is continuing to feed its hungry—at the rate of 6 cents per day per adult. But there is no assurance whatever that it can keep that up for long.

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In the Driftway

THE Drifter is well aware of the usual complaint about living in glass houses, but since architecture has become "modernized" he has a further objection. He was discussing modern house-planning the other day with an enthusiastic young architect; the architect produced plans and pictures. "Here's a splendid plan," he said, pulling out a drawing. "You observe that three sides of the living room are glass; when you open the windows it is exactly like being out of doors." The Drifter sighed. "But when I am indoors," he said, "it is so often because I do not wish to be outdoors. I may want to open the windows, but I still prefer the illusion of living in a house." His friend could not understand the objection. "Look at the light and sun and air you get," he insisted. "You sit in your living-room and you feel as if you were out in the garden." "What," said the Drifter, turning frivolous, "if they were watering the grass? Would the piano suffer because it was practically on the front lawn?"

* * * * *

UNDOUBTEDLY the rush toward an excess of sunlight and fresh air is the result of years spent next door to the shut-up parlor. The parlor—many of the Drifter's contemporaries will remember it—was aired dutifully once a month; at other times the shades were carefully drawn to keep the roses from fading off the carpet. The room smelled of camphor. The furniture lay perpetually under a thin layer of dust, for since the room was not used except at funerals or other equally important family occasions, it was not cleaned, as it was not freshened, as often as was the rest of the house. Rebelling against the parlor, so useless, so mortuary, we are turning now to the opposite extreme. We must have every room as bright as if it were in reality out of doors.

* * * * *

THE Drifter is familiar with all the arguments in favor of light and sun, and no one likes to sun himself—at the proper time—more than he does. But he would like to warn his friends who are building sun houses now that that particular form of architecture may very well be the mode and hardly more than the mode. There was a day when one room sufficed for shelter and most of life was lived in the open air; there was another day when the shelter improved in tightness and warmth, and so most domestic activities were moved indoors. As the facilities for inside comfort improved, they seemed all-sufficient and desirable above every other consideration. We could be warm in the house; very well then, shut every door and window, pull down the shades, and let us merely be warm. Now it is easy enough to be warm, so we turn to fresh conquests. And when all our living-rooms have become part of the garden, we shall doubtless turn around and put them inside again, safe and protected and dark. We shall discover that too much sun is enervating, that fresh air is bad for the ego. For spiritually what we want from a house is not only warmth and shelter but privacy. We want a spot on earth where we can go in, shut the door, draw the blinds, and carry on our pursuits, however nefarious, without fear of observation. The Drifter will freely grant that too many persons in our present economy are deprived of their share of the sun. But to remedy such a defect by removing the side walls and leaving only the roof may be a substitution of highly dubious value.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

The Case for the Boycott

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Your editorial, War by Boycott, which appeared in the March 9 issue of *The Nation,* appears to me to be a typical product of a mind that is afraid to take any definite or concrete action for fear of the foreseeable and unforeseeable consequences of that action. When a great problem such as the situation in the Far East today, with all its inherent implications for the future state and organization of the world, confronts a people, it is their duty to consider that problem in all its aspects and then determine on a line of action which will improve that situation. Undoubtedly any such action may affect adversely many people both at home and in the Orient. But this should not prevent them from acting, when by their failure to act they may well bring about far greater disaster.

Today there is a war going on between China and Japan. Is it not foolish to believe that this war will be stopped by our earnest hopes for peace? Is it not foolish to think that anything short of force will stop the mad actions of the Japanese war party, a party which has already shown its utter disregard for the opinion of the rest of the world? True, as you say, an economic boycott is an instrument of war, but do not forget that you are dealing with a war and with a group of people acquainted only with the instruments of force. Have not the well-meant words of the League of Nations Council and Assembly been as futile in stopping the Japanese legions as would be the actions of the well-meaning English clergymen who would stand between the two armies and stop their bullets?

In your editorial you attempt to analyze the effects of an economic boycott on Japan, on the one hand, and the United States, England, and France, on the other. You contend that in Japan the force of such a move would fall on the innocent men, women, and children who would be forced out of work and impoverished by such an act. In America you point out that the cotton industry in the South and the silk industry in the Northeast would suffer and that consequently many Americans would be thrown out of work. Apparently China and the effects of such a boycott on the Chinese were not considered of sufficient importance by your writer even to deserve mention.

For several years Japanese industry has been badly upset. The credit stringency in 1927, the deflation caused by the return to the gold standard in 1930, the inability to sell goods in China because of the boycott, and the fall of England from the gold standard have quite generally upset Japanese industry, with consequent unemployment and suffering for many of the workers. To counteract this crisis the militarists in control launched the punitive expedition against Shanghai to break the boycott and secure recognition of their claims in Manchuria.

What has been the result? The government has been compelled to borrow and spend large sums to carry on the war, thereby complicating the already delicate task of balancing the budget. Surely this burden which is being added to the backs of the Japanese people is not going to improve either their immediate or future condition. What is more, the dislocation of industry which the war has already caused, and which

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will continue if the war continues on the scale apparently necessary to conquer China, is not going to improve the industrial stability of the country. It would appear, therefore, that the policy of the Japanese government is bound to bring untold suffering to the people, even if it is successful.

Let us now turn to the United States. Undoubtedly the shutting off of the source of supply of our silk and of one of our best cotton markets would be felt by the silk and cotton industries. It is not likely, however, that an international boycott of Japan would be of long duration, and because of her dependence upon the United States today for raw cotton imports and silk exports it would not be long before trade would be resumed. Cotton sold to Japan is not used by the Japanese. These supplies are manufactured into cotton goods and sold abroad. In fact, in 1929 Japan exported more than three times as much cotton goods as the United States. If a boycott were to last indefinitely, undoubtedly the United States or Great Britain would take over a large part of this trade in cotton goods and thus the demand for raw cotton would be increased either at home or in Britain, already one of our best customers. Moreover, Japan has extensive interests in the production of cotton in China. If she were to carry out her conquest of China unhindered, she undoubtedly would extend these interests to the detriment of the American cotton industry. In this connection it is well to bear in mind that China is the third largest producer of cotton in the world.

With regard to the silk industry Japan has to depend largely on the United States for a market for her silk and it is doubtful that she would deem it either wise or possible to cut off her exports to this country for long. What is also evident is that the silk industries, because of the drop in their activities caused by the depression, are not among the vital industries of the country and undoubtedly a large part of the money and men employed in this field would be transferred to the manufacture of rayon were the silk supply to be cut off for any appreciable time. We see, therefore, that the damage that would befall the United States by a boycott of Japan is not beyond repair, and it is quite possible that the trade advantages of maintaining China as an independent country and an open market for our goods would far surpass any temporary loss we might sustain.

Let us now consider China, for in her existence rests all the hope and faith for a world order and international peace. The nations of the world have pledged themselves to maintain her territorial integrity, and if today they are to content themselves with the utterance of harmless and impotent words while Japan slowly but surely dismembers China, the people of the world cannot continue to place faith in the ability of these existing governments to secure peace.

Does it not seem, then, that although some American pocket-books might temporarily be injured by a boycott, it would be to the interests of America to carry out such action if the Japanese do not immediately stop their aggression in the East.

Buffalo, N. Y., March 7 FRANK J. DRESSLER

The Nation Opposes War and War by Boycott

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Does *The Nation* favor untrammeled international war? After reading the strange jumble of illogic in its two juxtaposed editorials, Mr. Stimson's Warning to Japan and War by Boycott, in the issue of March 9, one may draw such a conclusion.

One says, "If Japan can with impunity smash the Nine-Power and Kellogg treaties, then none of the international agreements is safe." Hasn't Japan done that, thus far without punishment—except what the Chinese have inflicted?

Well, what next? "The Japanese today are too excited to listen to reason." Then should other nations go on reasoning with them about these treaties they have smashed? "That a successful economic boycott would be close to ruinous for Japan there can be little doubt." But, "In the present instance the lion's share of such a boycott would fall upon the United States. . . . Obviously no one with elementary notions of justice would hold that the moral conscience of the world should be satisfied chiefly at the expense of American cotton growers and American silk workers."

And so, because two American industries (which could be compensated) might be injured, there is no way to prevent a nation "too excited to listen to reason" from smashing treaties, ignoring arbitration machinery, making bloody and devastating war upon another nation, and seizing territory by force of arms except the use of bombers, battleships, poison gas, and machine-guns by the nation attacked against the aggressor, probably to the ultimate involvement of the United States and the slaughter of many of its young cotton growers and silk workers.

Does *The Nation* prefer international war to the inconvenience of a commercial boycott?

New Haven, Conn., March 6 RICHARD KITCHELT

Is It War?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: President Hoover's recent pronouncement that the depression constitutes a condition "comparable to war, which must be fought on many fronts," contains a compelling suggestion for action on the part of our Chief Executive. Accordingly, he should, as in war time, requisition the railroads, the grain elevators, the industries in general which have failed in their important work of feeding and clothing the population. Let these life-giving agencies be operated to their full capacities to produce an abundance for all of the millions now starving in misery and desperation.

There is no lack of precedent for such action—and certainly no lack of necessity for it.

Pittsburgh, February 14 GEORGE A. COLEMAN

Deeds, Not Words, for Peace

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: It has become the fashion for ministers' associations to adopt pacifist resolutions. Last year 10,000 ministers, questioned by the *World Tomorrow*, declared that they would not sanction or participate in future wars. Unfortunately these groups and individuals seem to consider that their whole duty has been performed when they have expressed themselves on this matter.

Ministers occupy a strategic position for the propagation of pacifist doctrine. It is in their power to influence many people to adopt their point of view; at least to arouse interest and discussion. Only when a large body of American citizens refuses categorically to have anything to do with war, will it become impossible for this country to wage war. If these pacifist ministers are at all sincere, they cannot be content with the words they have uttered. They must inject life and meaning into their ministry by translating their words into action.

A large proportion of the members of my congregation has signed the following pledge: "We, the undersigned, do hereby state our opposition to war, and do pledge ourselves not

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to participate in, or aid in any manner, any war for whatever purpose or reasons"; and has further undertaken to circulate this pledge among friends and neighbors.

In the face of the crisis that impends, our sole hope for peace lies in the creation of a strong anti-war attitude. I suggest that it is the religious and patriotic duty of ministers who believe in peace to induce members of their congregations to sign such an anti-war pledge as the above. If each of these 10,000 ministers were to obtain fifty signatures to this pledge, we should have a vast anti-war army of 500,000. And the possibilities are limited only by the size of our population.

Easton, Pa., March 5 JOSHUA TRACTENBERG

John Haynes Holmes

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: As an admirer of Dr. John Haynes Holmes for the last twenty-two years, although not a member of his church, I should like to call attention to the fact that Dr. Holmes is now completing his twenty-fifth year as minister of the Community Church. This church is now facing a deficit of $8,463, which will be difficult to meet unless friends who believe in the ideals for which Dr. Holmes and his church stand will help at this time with contributions.

I suggest, therefore, that those who wish to assist with a contribution make it on the basis of $1 for each year that Dr. Holmes has given his labors to these ideals, a total of $25, which can be paid any time during the year 1932. I make the first pledge of $25. How many more will do so?

New York, February 11 HUGO JAURES PAUL

For Readers in Albany

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: The annual meeting of the Capital District *Nation* Club which was scheduled to be held on Monday evening, March 28, at the Unitarian Church, has been postponed until Saturday evening, April 9, at the same place at 8:15. Oswald Garrison Villard will be the guest of honor and speaker.

Albany, March 28 HAROLD P. WINCHESTER

Contributors to This Issue

GEORGE MILBURN is editor of "The Hobo's Hornbook," and author of "Oklahoma Town."

JOHN A. HOBSON is one of the foremost British economists and a contributing editor of *The Nation*.

WINTHROP SERGEANT is a former member of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and a contributor to various musical magazines.

LYNN RIGGS is the author of a volume of poems, "The Iron Dish."

EDWARD DAHLBERG is the author of "Bottom Dogs."

NORMAN THOMAS, a contributing editor of *The Nation*, is the author of "America's Way Out: A Program for Democracy" and "As I See It."

BENJAMIN GINZBURG is the author of "The Adventure of Science."

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL is professor of English literature in Loyola University and one of the editors of "Poetry: A Magazine of Verse."

V. F. CALVERTON is the editor of "The Making of Man: An Outline of Anthropology."

Finance

The Road to Recovery

IT was remarked in this column a few weeks ago that the attempt to lift the country out of depression through conscious, voluntary, and "controlled" inflation had failed, and that the failure was cause for deep satisfaction. By its nature such a program would tend to undermine the grounds of confidence, because the fictitious character of the movement would be apparent to everybody who had not fallen victim to a willing self-hypnotism. The whole episode, in retrospect, shows an almost naive misconception of the true nature of an inflationary movement.

If we are not to have a deliberately generated inflation however, it is still theoretically possible to have another kind which makes no pretense of being helpful or constructive. Failure to meet the government's expenses through taxation within a reasonable time, or projects for enormous spending to be financed by the issue of Federal Reserve notes, or even the prosecution of existing schemes for the relief of business to a point where they threaten the basis of government credit, can ultimately bring about a rise in prices, not founded on the belief that commodities are becoming more valuable, but that money, in terms of gold, is likely to become less valuable. The distinction may appear fine-drawn, but it is intensely practical. The former kind of inflation is based on hope, the latter on fear. The former would stop short of impugning the soundness of the currency, being brought under control before that point is reached, while the latter is very promptly out of control and contemplates, in the end, a currency divorced from gold.

No grounds exist on which anyone, except the most reckless of prophets, could predict that events in the United States are likely to lead to the results described. The danger at the moment is not a sudden lurch into greenbackism, but failure to realize the extreme fragility of the credit structure at present, the sensitiveness of government bonds to every breath of suspicion, and the readiness of enormous amounts of liquid capital to take flight across national borders at the first scent of danger. The panic which existed last autumn and winter has been allayed. We have begun to have a "psychological" recovery, and we can have the same kind of relapse. That is the real danger.

There is an alternative, and a hopeful one. It is that the healing processes will be allowed to continue until fright and timidity have been so reduced that the money-making urge will again venture to assert itself. It may well be that the pursuit of this policy will bring us face to face with some painful decisions between expediency and sound principles. We may find that our ambitious reconstruction program may have to be curtailed; certainly it should be curtailed if it threatens to involve the Treasury in such heavy borrowing operations that government credit begins to sag under the burden.

How soon actual business revival may result from this program is a question which, unfortunately, must remain in the realm of conjecture. The fore part of 1932 is slipping by without signs of a normal seasonal pick-up, which should have been in progress long before this. Yet there have been occasions—three years in the last thirteen—when industrial activity increased in the summer after a disappointing spring. Some striking parallels exist today to those industrial conditions which marked the "turn" in the depression of 1921. It can even be shown that stocks of raw materials, which have been increasing instead of decreasing all through the depression, acted in just the same way in 1920-22. Recovery, when it comes, is likely to arrive unheralded. S. PALMER HARMAN

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Books and Drama

Antique Evening

By LYNN RIGGS

Now in the twilight interim, the blue
Has taken half a field; insistently,
Red spiders at their silver spinning be,
And veins of frost at window; likewise you
Faintly in lilac at your mirror sway;
And all the quaint land bordering our lea
Wakes in the dusk—the larch, the cherry tree
Letting their leaves drift, as they ever may.

That I put by my sackcloth for a time
And wear the velvet that was laid away
Lay to the leverage of this antique
Evening, which now like some remembered rhyme
Suavely constrains the willing tongue to speak
Quaintly in accents of another day.

Hitler Versus Hindenburg

Hitlerism: The Iron Fist in Germany. By Nordicus. The Mohawk Press. $3.

I Saw Hitler. By Dorothy Thompson. Farrar and Rinehart. $1.

Hindenburg: The Man with Three Lives. By T. R. Ybarra. Duffield and Green. $3.

ONE would think, to judge by the publicity and propaganda coming out of that country, that there were only two major political forces and not three at work in Germany today. Yet it is true that the third, represented in the recent presidential campaign by Ernst Thälmann, the Communist candidate, must be lost sight of until the issue dividing the other two has been decided. These other two can quickly be named: one is republicanism, the other Hitlerism. Paul von Hindenburg is the candidate, and, in the Carlylean sense, the hero of the first. The second, too, has a candidate, Adolf Hitler, but it can hardly be said that he is of truly heroic proportions whatever his millions of followers may think of him.

Nordicus, who is probably a woman, sketches briefly the life story of Hitler, which is too well known by now to need further mention here. But Nordicus goes on to discuss Hitler's subordinates—Hitler has no "colleagues"; he is already the dictator. There is "the man with the clubfoot," Josef Goebbels, strong man of the Berlin area, whose physical disability is a constant embarrassment to the Nazi doctrine of "pure Germanic blood," for clubfooted people are not supposed to be pure-blooded. There are also Alfred Rosenberg, "the brains of the Nazi movement," editor-in-chief of the *Völkischer Beobachter,* official party organ; Wilhelm Frick, the first National Socialist to obtain a ministerial post in a German state—he was Minister of the Interior in Thuringia; Gottfried Feder, "the man who gave Hitler the germ idea for his new party"; Count Ernst Reventlow, of the old nobility, and thus a valuable political asset to this aggregation of defeated human beings—Reventlow is responsible for much of Hitler's foreign policy; Gregor Strasser, the organizer of the party's forces, who is seriously handicapped because of the desertion from the Nazi ranks of his brother Otto; and a host of others, all of whom blindly follow the will and the commands of Adolf Hitler. The organization of the party and of the *Sturmabteilung,* the armed—and paid—supporters of the party, is described with painstaking detail, as is also the Nazi program, which despite its commanding tone is really a welter of compromises designed to catch votes wherever votes can be caught—and even this confusing program is often enough sabotaged at the whim of Hitler whenever he believes that he can thereby strengthen himself politically. The Nazi press comes in for its share of attention, though as a matter of fact, as Nordicus points out, the party is largely dependent for press and propaganda support on Alfred Hugenberg, the newspaper magnate who is the leader of the Nationalist Party, and whose presidential candidate was Düsterberg. The fascists are at a loss to say just what sort of Reich they mean to create. They dare not speak of monarchy, for that would offend their republican adherents, and they dare not favor a new republic, for many of their supporters, especially their financial supporters, want to see the monarchy restored. And lately they have been careful to be polite to the Catholics, for the Catholics also have votes. So they leave themselves and the world in doubt as to the sort of state they would build—and they take out their meanness on the Jews. These people are to blame for everything: they started the war, invented international capitalism and also communism; they exploit the people, deny them freedom and bread. Jehovah pity the Jews, if the Hitlerites ever come into power.

But while Nordicus has done an excellent job of reporting—if we forgive the writer his or her tendency toward hysteria and toward abuse of the exclamation mark—"Hitlerism" does not go beneath the surface. There is no attempt to root out an explanation of the rise of this post-war phenomenon in Germany. Miss Thompson supplies us in a few words with the missing key:

> A Little Man has arisen in Germany. . . He has an audience—a vast audience, already prepared. It is the audience of the patriotic, offended, middle-class mob. That *this audience exists,* by the millions, is partly the fault of the Allies, and partly the fault of the German Republic. It is the fault of the Allies for imposing upon Germany, atop an armistice couched in the fairest terms, a stupid, inhumane, and impracticable peace, which no self-respecting nation in the world would accept for longer than the time and strength it takes to break it. It is the fault of the German Republic for failing to be genuinely true to its own principles; for allowing the courts, the universities, and many of the schools to continue to be conducted in the old pre-war spirit; for being weak and half-hearted in the prosecution of the semi-military bands which have terrorized the republic ever since its inception. And so this Little Man rides the whirlwind of twelve years of misrule for which the whole world is responsible.

Miss Thompson ignores entirely the play of economic forces which have unquestionably done their part in the evolution of Hitlerism. But it must be acknowledged that the struggle between republicanism and Hitlerism is not one of economics, but of blind, unreasoning prejudices. The basic struggle will doubtless come later. Meanwhile personalities have the center of the stage. And of Hitler's fantastically overrated personality Miss Thompson says:

> When I walked into Adolf Hitler's room, I was convinced that I was meeting the future dictator of Germany. In something less than fifty seconds I was quite sure that I was not. It took just about that time to measure the startling insignificance of this man who has set the world agog.

Hitler is without question the petty fellow Dorothy Thompson

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saw. Beside him, or indeed beside almost any of the public figures of present-day Germany, Hindenburg reaches titanic stature. Mr. Ybarra, though much of his story is necessarily old, has put together a picture of the *Reichspräsident* that is new, for not until recently was it suspected that there is something more to the man than a soldier's slavish devotion to duty. This something, the discovery of which astounded Hindenburg's reactionary compatriots, Mr. Ybarra calls "character"—but he really means something more than that term usually signifies.

> Many students of European affairs [he writes], carefully estimating the value and potency of Hindenburg's qualities, have concluded that he cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered a great man. Whereupon Hindenburg, by hook or by crook, manages to achieve things which (calculations clearly indicate) are possible only to men endowed with greatness.

Hindenburg's first two "lives"—his early military service, and his recall to the army, after he had been retired for age, to shine at Tannenberg, and to serve, though less brilliantly, as Chief of the General Staff—merely present the record of a faithful, somewhat bullheaded soldier. To him Wilhelm Hohenzollern was the All-Highest. And when the Kaiser had suddenly to depart in the uncertain days of November, 1918, Hindenburg was faced with a decision unique in his military career. Should he remain the super-militarist, faithful to the monarchy, and seek by force of arms to suppress that strange, chaotic, republican Germany that had arisen out of the ruins of war? Or should he put his country above the glorious but departed autocracy that had ruled it? He unhesitatingly "ranged himself on the side of the new Germany against the old." But his country was not to learn this until several years had passed. Monarchists ever dreaming of a restoration induced him to run for President in 1925, and with the help of that popular Hindenburg legend which had been born on the battlefield at Tannenberg, they elected him. And then, instead of conspiring with the monarchists to overthrow the republic, Hindenburg remained loyal to the new order; he supported Stresemann, accepted the Young Plan, and threw his weight behind Brüning and Groener. Not a republican, he has shown himself the republic's strongest supporter. It is a pity that republics and democracies somehow seem quite unable to raise up truly strong men of their own, that the new Germany must go into the camp of the enemy to find a man great enough to pit against the noisy but hollow Hitler.

MAURITZ A. HALLGREN

The Fastidious Movement

Flesh Is Heir. By Lincoln Kirstein. Brewer, Warren and Putnam. $2.50.

MR. LINCOLN KIRSTEIN, the editor of *Hound and Horn,* may be grouped with a handful of young writers who represent the Fastidious Movement in American literature today. Though their achievements are still slender and tenuous, their aesthetic program is not to be dismissed. As a matter of fact, its importance has been far better exemplified in the provocative preface to Kenneth Burke's essayistic novel, "Towards a Better Life," than in Mr. Kirstein's narrative, "Flesh Is Heir." The publishers claim, speaking directly for their author, that the latter has written a novel without any traces of "naturalism" or "realism" in it. The entire statement is a humanistic pronouncement of sorts. Notwithstanding this, the only section of the book really worth reading strongly argues against the novelist's thesis, even disproves it.

The chapter titled 1922 is a closely knit chronicle of the institutional regimentation and life of a young boy in a preparatory school. This part of the novel is well detailed, and marked with incidents that bear a cogent resemblance to those unheightened occurrences and situations that clutter the pages of a Dreiser or a Sinclair Lewis. The prose, too, is amply sprinkled with slangy expressions and idiomatic turns that would seem out of place in a more formalized medium. The relationship between Roger Baum, an affluent Jew, explosively timorous, and Andy Stone, shiftless and sadistic, is compelling reading. Andy Stone, full of cruel, adolescent plans, and affecting a sub rosa knowledge of black magic, prognosticates that Roger Baum will die soon. Roger Baum is doubtful but impressed. Aware of his power over Roger and wishing more, Andy Stone threatens to kill him on the night that there is a full moon. For Roger Baum the succeeding days thereafter are marked with illness, nightmares, repressions, and a poisonous reticence toward his schoolmates and masters. Andy Stone's presence, immediate and unseen, casts a hallucinatory aura over Roger Baum's waking and dream life, and not until Andy has left school does he manage to reintegrate himself.

The following chapter, 1924, dealing with the voluntary apprenticeship of Roger Baum in a stained-glass shop, is much slighter. And from then on the book dwindles into egregiously stereotyped conversations, unimportant peregrinations to London and Paris, and niggling autobiographical mementos. There are a few casual, hard-boiled episodes in the book: the seduction of a chorus girl by Andy Stone, her death, a shooting, an initiation, and a regurgitative frat scene—none of which is done in the eclectic and "unnaturalistic" manner.

Briefly, it seems that Mr. Kirstein has not been able to carry out his program because he has not yet sloughed off the influence that contemporary realistic readings have made upon him. And although in places he shows a talent for writing, one can hardly recommend "Flesh Is Heir" either for its entertainment or its literary uniqueness.

EDWARD DAHLBERG

Dreiser as Economist

Tragic America. By Theodore Dreiser. Horace Liveright. $2.

"TRAGIC AMERICA" is chiefly important because it was written by the author of "An American Tragedy." This book is Dreiser all the way through. In style most of it is Dreiser at his worst. And that is pretty bad. A meticulous English department in high school or college could have almost as much fun with the book as the economics department. Certainly there are very few pages which the statisticians and conservative economists cannot indict for some degree of misuse or misinterpretation of facts and figures. Even friendly critics have called attention to a few of the author's glaring errors and to his extraordinary inability to figure out percentages. I have no desire to add to this catalogue. Yet two or three characteristic bits of the statistical information, or misinformation, with which Dreiser loads up his book struck my eye and seem to deserve some comment. For instance, he says that in western Pennsylvania he found "unbelievable misery. Miners received wages of but from $14 to $24 for two weeks' work. Yet paying $25 a month for a shabby four-room house." I have seen in western Pennsylvania and elsewhere hundreds of pay slips, but I never saw any pay slip charging a miner $25 a month for a four-room shack. Often miners are charged more than $25 for rent plus other charges which are deducted from their wages, and that is probably what Mr. Dreiser means. He could have told the exact truth and made an even more impressive picture of misery.

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Elsewhere he calmly says, without any qualifying explanation: "The Methodists, however, have 893,881 in the mission fields (conceive that!) functioning most extensively in China and India." The context makes it perfectly plain that the author thinks that this vast army is a paid army of propagandists. Actually there are only about 1,400 paid missionaries of the Methodist Church in foreign countries.

The author's Communist sympathies and enthusiasm for Russia do not make him accurate when discussing the Soviet Republic. Thus he says, or clearly implies, that the Russian clergy were not disfranchised for a period of ten years. As a matter of fact, they were disfranchised from the date of the promulgation of the first Soviet constitution.

The abundance of mistakes like this, and worse, does not deprive the book of a certain massive and deserved impressiveness. Mr. Dreiser is obviously in earnest. The situation he describes is so bad that many mistakes in detail do not make the total picture essentially untrue. They do make it unnecessarily vulnerable to critics. Moreover, it is not academic to insist that the leaders and builders of a new social order should justify confidence by a capacity for using facts and figures not only with subjective honesty but with objective competence.

In so far as Mr. Dreiser goes in for suggestions concerning a possible way out of America's tragedy, he shows strong Communist leanings. They are, however, literary rather than precise, and one feels that the Communist Party is well advised in refusing him membership but keeping him as an outside sympathizer. He is very scornful concerning the use the people can or will make of the ballot, and most of the time is rather skeptical about the workers to whom he must appeal. He wants an American approximation to the Russian system of government, but he sincerely says: "I would be the last to want the brutality which might accompany such a [revolutionary] change."

In short, neither the student nor the ordinary reader will turn to this book for an accurate statistical picture of America or for a well-thought-out guide to revolutionary change by violent or peaceful processes. Yet I repeat that the book is impressive, and I confess that for the life of me I could not decide as I read it how much of its weight was due to the fact that I knew Dreiser wrote it and how much to its own inherent quality. A shocking confession for a reviewer to make! I suspect, however, that some of its weight is due to the qualities that have made Theodore Dreiser in the field of fiction an extraordinarily significant figure.

NORMAN THOMAS

Sexology, Russian Style

The Biological Tragedy of Woman. By Anton Nemilov. Covici-Friede. $2.50.

THIS is a book on sexology, translated from the Russian and carrying something of the flavor of the present Soviet ideology. The thesis of the book is that in the human species the organs of the sex instinct are more developed than in any other animal, at the very time that on account of his brain development man is less content than any other creature to obey the natural law of instinct. In the case of woman this biological tragedy of the race is tremendously sharpened by the fact that in the biological division of labor nature has thrown all the sexual burdens on her side, leaving her with very little of the intellectual freedom which her male partner enjoys.

While both of these contentions are true within limits, one cannot help wondering whether the manner of their affirmation is not a reflex of present conditions in Russia. In the name of Marxian materialism the whole fabric of "bourgeois" morality, with its emphasis on spiritual and romantic values, has been swept away, and men have turned to pure biology in the expectation of finding a simple guide to personal problems. But a biological ethics has proved a contradiction in terms. Animals, which live on the plane of pure biology, need no ethics, while man needs an ethics because in him there is a consciousness opposed to blind instinct. But for that very reason it is impossible to build up an ethics without affirming the values of consciousness as in some sense superior to the impulsions of instinct. The instincts cannot be organized by consciousness unless consciousness has its own rights.

Even the disproportion of burdens between the sexes, which is what the author calls the biological tragedy of woman, is a problem only in reference to the dignity and autonomy of consciousness. And it can be solved only when in the relationship of the sexes a spiritual camaraderie, based on the rapport of thinking beings, is developed to a degree strong enough to organize and regulate the instinctive interrelations of the sexes as biological organisms.

BENJAMIN GINZBURG

The Career of Ford Madox Ford

Return to Yesterday. By Ford Madox Ford. Horace Liveright. $4.

"THE dubious pleasure of remembering analytically" is an indulgence which Mr. Ford has never been able to deny himself. Critics may question the worth of his historical analysis, but no one can deny the pleasure he takes in creating and patronizing literature, or in writing its annals. He has, in fact, returned to yesterday too often to permit great novelty or surprise in the present compendious record of his career. It will, however, be read with respect by anyone conscious of his service to contemporary literature and of the two abundant resources that have made that contribution possible —enthusiasm and a "sense of the past." One may marvel that in his eagerness to welcome new friends, writers, and "movements," Mr. Ford has had the luck to play so many winning hands. Yet "luck" is a poor word for the perspicacity that took its lessons at the feet of veteran pre-Raphaelites and Henry James, accepted on petition the collaboration of the then obscure Conrad, befriended Stephen Crane, set the *English Review* and the *Transatlantic* afloat with their brilliant crews, and kept abreast of creative thought during many years of journalistic distraction and war service until the Tietjens tetralogy was produced. Through the four decades here chronicled (with scant attention, however, to post-war years), Mr. Ford has been at every point conscious of the program of events. He has profitably balanced his avidity for contemporary insurgence with a loyalty to the Victorian era, of which he remains, in many respects, an isolated survivor.

The past has been the lodestar of his career from its beginning. He started life as the inheritor of a circle of famous artists and writers who had survived the almost heroic rigors of Victorian fame. His literary ambitions were supervised by distinguished relatives to whom he paid the tribute of acting as their historian. The friendships and associations of his crowded later years have not encouraged him to relinquish these projects in reminiscence and memoir-writing. Whether in volumes of criticism and biography like "Ford Madox Brown," "Henry James," and "Joseph Conrad"; in books of historical or documentary motivation like the Katherine Howard trilogy (1906-08), the English series (1905-07), and the Tietjens group; in books on literary craft like "The Critical Attitude"; or in those volumes of pure reminiscence to which "Return to Yesterday" now acts as a pendant, "Memories and Impressions" (1912) and "Thus to Revisit" (1921), his work has been

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spurred on by a consciousness of temporal perspectives and of his own privileged existence among them. Disappointments in his public career have been accompanied by disorders in his domestic (he has spared his public the latter, but Miss Violet Hunt has not); yet through all the excitement, through all the collisions between external convention and personal independence, and in spite of a love of "making things grow" which has made him desert literature for spasmodic excursions into agriculture, he has been intent on staying young and contemporary.

By his own admission he has had to struggle against the fatigue of setting words to paper, a statement which his sixty books and unnumbered articles of journalism would make difficult to credit were it not for his much-repeated and unquestionably sincere belief that the making of novels and poetry is the noblest occupation of man, worth the last ounce of his spiritual and physical energy. This same article of faith is the clue to his unbounded generosity for young talent. His books will have their value as "mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de son temps" chiefly because of the courageous, and sometimes costly, support he gave to a succession of poorly appreciated authors. From Conrad, Hudson, and Crane, through Lawrence, Pound, and the imagists, down to some of the most original of current novelists, these beneficiaries of his editorial acumen provide a testimony to friendship which might pardon an even more repetitious and self-congratulatory record than Mr. Ford has written.

Generosity and enthusiasm are not, however, proofs of creative authority, and cannot enter into an account of Mr. Ford's claims to distinction among twentieth-century novelists. In the nineties he was hailed, as he frequently reminds us, as "the most-boomed author in England" and "the foremost English stylist." With this beginning, his subsequent uninspired and aimless course must have come with the pain of distinct anti-climax. For about twenty years he wrote books which he can now call no better than "worthless." Admitting the pressure of financial necessity that kept him in journalism, one is reminded by the lives of Conrad and Hudson, and by the delineation of his own Tietjens, that another course was open to him and that some failure in purpose or integrity kept him from following it. The clue to this failure is discoverable in the present volume.

Facts are perhaps not, ultimately, of great spiritual significance, but the discipline required to master them is. Mr. Ford's happy unconcern about dates, sources, and authenticity in his anecdotes stands in no greater contrast to Conrad's tortuous search for words and data in preparing a novel than do the "worthless" fictions of Mr. Ford's middle years to novels like "Lord Jim" and "Nostromo." The garrulous self-esteem which can be as ingratiating as Mr. Yeats's or as tedious as Sisley Huddleston's, and which could condone in this book wholesale repetitions from earlier volumes as easily as it could tempt disaster for the Tietjens chronicle by yielding to a New York lady-editor's plea for a fourth volume, stands in sharp contrast to the rigorous self-effacement of W. H. Hudson or Stephen Crane. And the uncertainty of motive in Mr. Ford's projects may be traced at least partly to his inability to resolve and localize his aesthetic and civil morals. He is hospitable to revolt and insurgence in the creative order, yet confesses himself "a sentimental Tory," loving "pomp, banners, divine rights, unreasonable ceremonies, and ceremoniousness." Pitched less precariously than Henry James or Conrad between several national allegiances, he has tacked fitfully from German sympathies to English loyalties and ultimately to French enthusiasms. He has been in turn an heir of the Victorians, an arbiter among the Georgians, and a post-war *révolté*. His creative impulses have been centrifugal, his style in all but four books heavily damaged by exhibitionism, and his attention susceptible to almost every literary breeze in the air. His patronage has been spent wisely, but far too eclectically for his own good. One of his critics has wished for him "less facility and more self-restraint." It would be equally possible to complain of the irresolution which has denied his work conviction and a center. Given a host of personal acquaintances, intimately observed, he has produced novels of extraordinary perception and technique like "The Good Soldier" and "Some Do Not." Left to his own devices he has written books whose excellent wit and enlightening anecdotes do not annul a sense of frustrated intelligence and misspent energies. On a life of such generosity and on books of such charm as Mr. Ford's this is an ungrateful reflection; but in his chapters on James, Conrad and Hudson, no less than in his accounts of desultory literary adventure in London, New York, and Paris, Mr. Ford provides illustrations that make such a reflection irresistible.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL

Mind, Matter, and Marx

The Emergence of Man. By Gerald Heard. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.75.

THIS book is a popularization of the theories which Mr. Heard advanced in his two previous books, "The Ascent of Humanity" and "The Social Substance of Religion." Like all popularizations, it suffers from the vice of oversimplified analysis and promiscuous generalization. While it makes an approach to problems which few popularizers would hazard, it dodges the main difficulties which those problems present to the careful thinker. Suggestive as it is in its speculations—and it is arrestingly suggestive throughout—it is without that caution which is necessary to all sound interpretation.

"The Emergence of Man" aims to be a sequel to Winwood Reade's "Martyrdom of Man." Whereas Reade's book, as Mr. Heard asserts, was "the forerunner of psychological history," "The Emergence of Man" seeks to be a full-fledged embodiment of the psychological method. Man's emergence, as Mr. Heard conceives it, is a process of self-discovery, self-realization. Beginning with the emergence of the half-men on the Simian horizon, the author attempts to reconstruct in somewhat romantic style the advance of *homo sapiens* and the early evolution of human culture. As in his other books, Mr. Heard is here interested in the problem of individualism and the early precedence of matriarchy; in the fact that in primitive society consciousness did not reside in the individual but in the species, the group, and that only later, after the matriarchal form had fallen into desuetude, did individual consciousness evolve, arriving, as he declares, at its first point of climax in the person of Aknaton. Mr. Heard's pouncing upon Aknaton as the earliest exemplar of the individualistic spirit is an example of the sort of thing that so often stultifies his argument. Individualistic consciousness dawned in many societies previous to the Egyptian; it dawned, in fact, as soon as private property began to develop in primitive society, disintegrating the group and separating individuals off into classes. But Mr. Heard will have nothing to do with material causes; to him all change is mental and not material. "It is the mind of man that deposits the social form in which man lives," Mr. Heard maintains, and not the social form which conditions the mind of man.

It is this assumption which leads Mr. Heard to misinterpret the place of science in civilization and to misconstrue the philosophy of Marxism. His contention, for example, that "science will undermine the Soviets, [for] only exploration without term of reference allows science to advance" is based first upon a misinterpretation of the attitude of the U. S. S. R. toward science, and secondly upon a misunderstanding of the whole reference or "coordinate concept" of contemporary science.

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n connection with Marxism, he makes the common error, all oo popular in America, of confusing it with economic determinsm instead of identifying it with historical materialism. In his eyes Marxism is an attempt to explain phenomena by economics alone, divorced from the psychological factor. "Bolshevism," he avows, "with its obsession with economics, despises psychology." Such a statement betrays a deplorable lack of knowledge. Marxism, of which bolshevism is but an application, considers the psychological factor as fully as does Mr. Heard; only, because it is profounder, it considers it in terms of its social causes instead of merely in terms of its individual, superficial effects.

V. F. CALVERTON

Books in Brief

Mr. Gresham and Olympus. By Norman Lindsay. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.

One is extremely sorry to find Norman Lindsay's new novel essentially a repetition of his first, "Every Mother's Son." From this circumstance it would appear that Mr. Lindsay has very little to say, although great ingenuity in saying it. The values he celebrates have been adequately defined as drinking, wenching, animal spirits—all the factors necessary to having a glorious time. "Mr. Gresham and Olympus" is set in Sydney. Mr. Gresham is an architect of about fifty who, finding his family actively cultivating Mr. Lindsay's values, determines to savor them himself. His attempts are frustrated, and in contrast to his children he appears an ass. The book is amusing and lively, but not very important. If Mr. Lindsay has further novels on the stocks we hope that he ventures into new pastures. His gift for expression is too marked to be hobbled by a limited view of the possibilities of living.

The Strange Adventures of Jonathan Drew. By Christopher Ward. Simon and Schuster. $2.50.

Mr. Christopher Ward, in a manner he would like to think of as being similar to that of Daniel Defoe, but which in reality is more like that of Mr. Thomas of "The Old Farmer's Almanac," has here set down the adventures of one Jonathan Drew. At great pains he has created an authentic setting—the United States in the early eighteen hundreds. With the exception of the account of the yellow-fever epidemic in New York City, which is reminiscent of Charles Brockden Brown, it is a wild scene of highwaymen, militant revivalists, adventurers, and maidens of the wilderness. The structure of Mr. Ward's work resembles that of a string of sausages, yet in each section there is usually something of sufficient interest to make it palatable. There are good yarns and bad yarns, all of which the author tries to keep exciting by killing off the minor characters at a prodigious rate. One leaves "Jonathan Drew" in somewhat the same mood as one would leave an over-garrulous grandfather whose life has been hair-raising if nothing else.

The Weather Tree. By Maristan Chapman. The Viking Press. $2.50.

The Chapman tales of the Tennessee hill country are notable for the language employed—both in conversations and descriptions. The idiom and vocabulary are not quite like those used by any other writers of stories laid in southern Appalachian hill counties. The authenticity of this language has been vouched for by those who should know. And certainly it is altogether delightful with its Biblical expressions, its seventeenth-century locutions, and its Scotticisms. It brings to mind a wealth of allusion in homely phraseology for the literary-minded. And it powerfully aids the story, which tells of two

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"outlanders," a man and a woman, who endeavor to enter int the life of the scraggy little hill town of Glen Hazard. Thes outlanders and the hill people move along parallel lines i thought and action. They can never touch one another. The can scarcely understand one another. The young woman soc ology student is as far from the mark in her conceptions of th inner life of the hill people as they are ignorant of the outsid world. And the young man's grandiose attempt to industrializ and civilize the community is misunderstood and proves abortive The love story that moves through the novel is romantic, bu aims at truth. The whole has moments that touch universa themes.

Maria Fernanda. By Huberto Perez de la Ossa. Translate from the Spanish by E. Allison Peers. Little, Brown and Company. $2.

The daughter of a Spanish grandee, her mother dead Maria Fernanda is brought up by a strict English governess then sent away to a convent. The first moment of drama t enter her life comes when Ramon Peguja, fashionable portrai painter and lover of her stepmother, decides that he prefers th saintly beauty of Maria Fernanda. Maria Fernanda desires t respond to his love, but she is horrified when a gossip tells he of Ramon's relation with her stepmother. Her father, the old count, having died in the meantime, she tells Ramon that he must now marry her stepmother. After this act of renunciation she becomes more saintly and more pallid than ever. She marries a serious young archaeologist-duke, but marriage does not compensate her for the lack of love—that is, sinful love—in her life. From lack of evil she withers away like an unwatered plant, and dies, ironically, near a handsome boy who is just beginning to conceive a passion for her. It is a surprisingly naive little aquarelle, with none of the wit or audacity that might have relieved it. The reader hopefully waits for the serpent to spring from beneath the flowers, but it never does. The nicest passages are perhaps those which deal with Maria Fernanda's childhood and the meek life of the aristocratic convent.

Times and Tendencies. By Agnes Repplier. Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.

Speaking of modern attitudes on war in her essay Peace and the Pacifist, Miss Repplier says with due irony that "we have grown lucid, and logical, and humane, and incompetent." These adjectives might apply readily enough to her own work. Through an urbanity and intellectual grace which are by right more French or English than American, she is—with the possible exception of C. M. Flandrau—our last defender of the genteel essay tradition. Amid the glib triviality that passes for critical sophistication in smart magazines and studios, her steady voice stirs the echo of a classic mastery in style and spiritual reserve. Among topics as varied as those of William Lyon Phelps—pills, movies, traveling Americans, "the pleasure of possession," and "cure-alls"—she asserts the continuity of a judicial intelligence which lies beyond even the vaguest aspirations of the New Haven sage. Yet her rapier seldom transfixes the problem of right and wrong. She approaches an abyss only to pause at its brink with a rhetorical question. Between the hate and threat of war, "who shall predict the end?" "America will mend the world in her way, Russia will mend it in hers." Miss Repplier seldom hazards the decision which would make her ruminations congeal. Her tenets are fixed and usually inscrutable, but her conclusions are distressingly irresolute. Her knowledge of affairs is up to date and active, but her grasp of life appears remote and theoretical. She has few equals as a commentator, but her aloofness from moral committal invites no serious rivals. Her charity and sympathies make her a model of enlightened thought and citizenship, yet in making the

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"liberating mind" for which she pleads incompatible with intellectual responsibility, she remains a spectator rather than an influence in contemporary life. One accepts her assertion that "peace and wealth are serviceable possessions; but only intense personalities can create art and letters. . . . It takes all we have to give to make a world morally worthy of man."

Sophokles: Antigone. A New Redaction in the American Language. By Shaemas O'Sheel. Brooklyn: 157 Clinton Street. $2.

Mr. O'Sheel means by his subtitle merely that he has translated the "Antigone" into the language he naturally speaks; since he is an educated man the result is clear, plain, modern English—with, to be sure, an occasional Irish strain explainable first by Mr. O'Sheel's name (though he has always lived in America), secondly by the fact that his model for the present translation was Yeats's "Oedipus," and thirdly by the apparent fact that he has not forgotten the sound of the plays of Synge. "And when, after a long while, the storm had passed, we saw this girl, and she crying aloud with the sharp cry of a bird in its grief." Thus the guard speaks the famous speech about Antigone at the body of her dead brother; in perfectly plain American, of course, there would be a "was" between the "she" and the "crying." But no matter. Mr. O'Sheel has produced a readable, actable, and highly moving version of Jebb's version—he knows no Greek—of Sophocles's perfect tragedy.

The Immortal Jew. A Drama by S. R. Lysaght. The Macmillan Company. $4.25.

As in most modern attempts at poetic drama, "The Immortal Jew," using again the Wandering Jew legend, is neither good drama nor good poetry. As for its philosophic enterprise—that of naturalizing the doctrines of metempsychosis into the Christian faith—one can only marvel at the capacity for mental insulation that permits the author to occupy himself so in these times.

Drama

Philosophical Criticism

IT is all too seldom that current plays are considered from any consistent point of view. The exigencies of daily or weekly criticism make it difficult for the reviewer to do more than to comment in the most fragmentary fashion, and it is only rarely that he has an opportunity to express any general philosophic convictions, even if—and this is rare enough—he happens to have acquired any. The critic of general literature is expected to be interested in literature as such, but the only specialized information or interest which the dramatic critic possesses is all too often relevant rather to the show business as a business than to the drama or the stage. He is wise in the ways of Broadway, and he knows the inside story of playwriting, acting, and producing. In that sense his comments on the passing show are comments from the inside. But it is rare to find him assuming that the plays which he witnesses almost nightly have any significance except as parts of such a passing show.

Mr. R. Dana Skinner writes a weekly review for the Catholic *Commonweal,* and his book* appears, in part at least, to have been rewritten from the files of that magazine; but the very least which can be said of it is that it expounds a philosophy and achieves a genuine unity by treating the individual plays, not as isolated happenings, but as classifiable phenomena which reveal our preoccupation with certain problems and our tendency

* "Our Changing Theater." By R. Dana Skinner. The Dial Press. $3.

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toward certain solutions. From the columns of the daily and weekly press one learns that this year Miss Blank has leaped into fame, or that plays about gangsters are not so popular as they were last season, but one seldom gets the sense that these fashions have any significance outside the world of Broadway. Mr. Skinner, on the other hand, perceives and makes us perceive that the contemporary drama, entangled though it is with all sorts of meretricious traditions and methods, does have an intellectual and spiritual significance.

He has, to begin with, a very vivid sense of the theater's ambiguity as an institution. "It is haunted by the world's vagabonds, fed by the poets, given shelter by the gamblers, and knocked about by the gusts of popular fancy. It belongs neither to the temple nor to the market-place. It is too commercial for the one and not practical enough for the other. It falls to pieces if you try to make a pulpit of it, yet you cannot turn it into a business without smashing the very power of illusion it lives by." But having recognized this ambiguity, Mr. Skinner devotes himself to a consideration of the sincerest plays of the last decade, and in them he discovers an effort, at least partially successful, to say things which are not only worth saying but eminently sayable in the dramatic form. His expositions of individual plays are often admirable, but the chief effect of his book depends less upon this than upon the fact that his significant groupings reveal unities in the contemporary dramatic effort which might otherwise pass unperceived. When in two chapters he speaks, for example, of "Tragedy Without Song" and of "The Song in Tragedy," he brings "Street Scene" and "The Great God Brown" together, and shows how the fallacy of "Machinal" is the same as the fallacy of "Lucky Sam McCarver." But in so doing he also gets below the superficial characteristics which would lead less philosophical critics to devise less significant tragedy. Perhaps to say that these groupings are chiefly responsible for his success in making the drama of today seem important is to confess that few playwrights are sufficiently outstanding as individuals to seem important in themselves. But the fact remains that by considering contemporary tragedy and contemporary comedy as wholes Mr. Skinner gives them a dignity which they usually seem to lack when an individual play is asked to stand alone.

That I or any other reader should disagree with individual judgments and even with some of the general principles proclaimed is both to be expected and not particularly important. When, for example, Mr. Skinner opposes censorship on the ground that "a general public agreement on moral standards must precede any legal censorship that is not a farce," and also that such censorship is "impossible until the battle of ideas has been fought to a finish," he is making a logical statement which would enable us to cooperate in meeting any repressive movement against the theater likely to arise in our lifetime, even though, of course, I could not agree with his implied conviction that the battle of ideas ever will be "fought to a finish." So, on the other hand, I should attempt to resolve his initial paradox—the statement that the theater, despite its serious function, "falls to pieces when you try to make a pulpit of it"—in a fashion which would doubtless not be acceptable to him. I should maintain that this is because the function of drama, like that of the other arts, is experimental; that when it deals with "problems" it does so because it considers them still open—even when the pulpits consider them closed. I should maintain, in other words, that in so far as it is concerned with the discussion of ethics or politics or sociology it cannot cease to be inquiringly skeptical without becoming a pulpit. And I assume that Mr. Skinner, as a liberal Catholic, would hardly go that far. But all this has nothing to do with the central fact, which is that "Our Changing Theater" is that very rare thing, a genuinely philosophical book about the contemporary drama.

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